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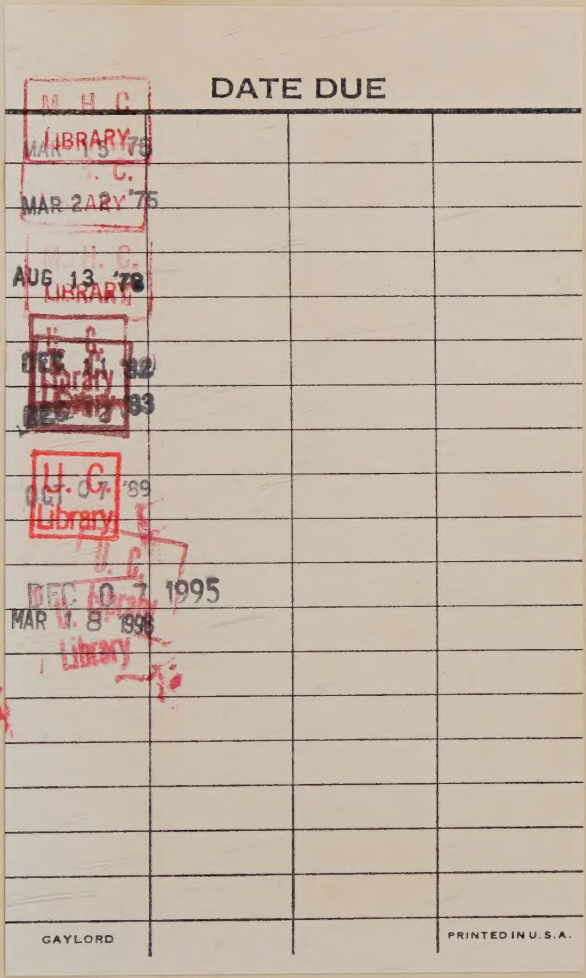
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CARTESIANISM

CARTESIANISM

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BY
MICHAEL J. MAHONY, S.J., PH.D.
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
Author of "Formal Logic" and "Epistemology"

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INTRODUCTION

THE subject that is to claim our attention and study in this class during the coming year is the "History and Criticism of the Various Philosophical Systems of Modern Thought." That we may have a sufficiently clear concept of what this subject means, it will be well, by way of introduction, to stake off its territory and define its limits, so that the other branches of philosophical studies which may engage your attention may not encroach upon the property rights of our subject, or our rights upon theirs.

1. What, then, in the first place, are we to understand by a philosophical system of thought?
2. Secondly, what philosophical systems are unanimously set down as modern?
3. Lastly, what method shall we pursue in setting forth the history of the latter systems, and what standard shall we adopt in passing a critical judgment on their merits?

Let us try, in the first place, to understand what is a "philosophy" or a philosophical system of thought, and how is it differentiated from all other kinds of thought. In other words, what does the mind endeavor to solve when it philosophizes?

Now, thought may be described as the exercise of our reasoning faculty upon any subject. In this sense thought is a *subjective* process or activity. Thought is also taken in an *objective* sense to signify the results of thought; that is, the truths which it dis-

covers. Now, among the truths that rational thought brings within the sweep of our knowledge, there are some that are beyond and impervious to the ken of sense. We grasp, for instance, by thought or reasoning alone, the truths of mathematics, the laws of chemistry, physics, and of the natural sciences; we may reason out the solution of great political problems, for example, the question of the payment or reduction of the Allies' war debts.

But the rational thought that is exercised on subjects such as those and the conclusions at which it arrives, are not, strictly speaking, philosophy or philosophical thought. Philosophy or philosophical thought is differentiated from all other rational thought by two characteristics.

In the first place, philosophical thought or philosophy exercises itself in not setting forth the *immediate causes* that explain facts or phenomena. When a scientist, for instance, explains that water is a combination of H and O, he is not philosophising. Philosophy probes deeper, and professes to set forth *the ultimate or last causes of all the things that exist around us.* All other sciences achieve their purpose when they assign the cause that is next to hand for any happening or fact. The chemist is satisfied when he discovers the simple material elements that compose a compound body, or the kind of material substance a combination of certain elements will form. Chemistry does not ask, what ultimately is matter itself? What cause has brought this material universe into existence? These deeper questions philosophy asks and professes to answer. If a chemist discusses those questions, he is no longer playing the rôle of chemist, but of a philosopher. The science of political economy will investigate the causes of the production and distribution of the wealth possessed by men. But it

will not ask, what is man? What is the first cause of his existence? Philosophy alone professes to answer those deeper questions. Its field of inquiry begins where the other sciences leave off. It ceases not to ask its inquisitive "whys" until its last "why" is answered.

The first characteristic, then, that differentiates the science of philosophy or philosophical thought from all the other natural sciences is this, that philosophy moves thoughtfully along the successive links of a series of causes that account for any fact, until it discovers by its reasoning the *ultimate,* or, if you wish, the *first cause,* in the series. Hence, sound philosophy must reasonably discover that the last link in any chain of causes, however long, rests in the hand of God. You may often hear a child of six or seven exercising this instinct of a philosopher. The child may begin by asking, for example, — "Mother, what makes the kettle boil?" Mother — "The fire, of course." Child — "What makes the fire?" Mother — "The coal in the range." Child — "Where did the coal come from?" Mother — "From the mines under ground." Child — "Who put the coal in the mines?" The mother, astonished at the growing reasoning of her inquisitive child, is ultimately forced to answer — "God, darling." Beyond God there is no other cause. He is the last or ultimate cause of all things. That is philosophy. It professes to lead the mind on and on until it points out the ultimate source, or last cause, of all things around us.

All other special sciences are satisfied to remain and rest at some inn on the sides of the mountain of thought. Philosophy climbs to the top. Hence philosophy is marked off from all other natural sciences in this, that it is not satisfied with the discovery of any cause for things around us. It demands always the very last or ultimate cause or explanation of all

things. So that philosophy begins where the special sciences leave off.

Philosophy is marked by a second characteristic. It relies in its investigations and questionings *upon the light of natural reason.* Hence, strictly speaking, philosophy is not sectarian. It accepts the facts revealed to us by our senses and the investigations of the other sciences, and then consults its natural reason to interpret it all. Philosophy is, therefore, limited to what unaided reason can discover about the origin of matter, the origin of man and his destiny, the origin of the soul, and so forth. It has to do with origins. Because feeble reason can discover only a few truths that have been also revealed by God, the great bulk of divinely revealed dogmas are outside the field of philosophy's vision. To be outside the field of reason does not imply, however, any contradiction to reason.

Philosophy, therefore, does not include within its province the discovery of truths that are, as such, divinely revealed. They are beyond its territory. Since it is the business of philosophy to exercise the powers of natural reason to discover the ultimate causes of naturally acquired facts, while it is reserved for Sacred Theology to exercise human reason on facts that are divinely revealed, hence philosophy is differentiated from Sacred Theology in this, that though natural reason is exercised in both, still in philosophy the matter upon which reason works is naturally acquired, whereas in the case of Sacred Theology the matter upon which reason works is supernaturally acquired, because it is supplied by divine Revelation.

Having now understood what philosophy is, namely, the *ultimate explanation which the natural light of reason gives of all things* that exist, it is not to be

xpected, when one considers how feeble is the light f reason, and how prone to error, that every leader f thought, who thinks for himself, will agree in the ccount they give of the final explanation of the facts f all existence. It is as difficult for reason to keep its oise, so as not to swerve from the straight line of ruth in an intricate and long process of reasoning, as is for a man to keep his balance while walking upon narrow plank over a deep chasm. Hence it is with he ultimate explanations which reason has given for he things around us, as it is with our watches — no two o just alike, yet each person believes his own. If we ook back, then, over the history of the ultimate explanations or philosophies of all things around us, we hall find these philosophies as different and numerous as were the great leaders of thought that pro-ounded them. Plato has one kind of explanation or hilosophy, Aristotle another, St. Thomas and the Scholastics another. We may illustrate the origin of he bewildering number and variety of philosophical ystems in the pages of history in this way: Let a umber of men, each furnished by the light of a dim antern, attempt to trace their way through a vast nd dark forest to a certain destination, without uide or compass, without the help of the sun, moon, r stars. Though each could, *absolutely speaking*, ind his way out, yet the likelihood is that they would ll go astray in such a trackless forest. It is as difficult for an individual mind to track its way by the ight of feeble reason through the labyrinth of evidence and argument, with the view of arriving at a orrect and ultimate explanation of the universe and ll that it contains, as it is for a man without a guide o make his way through a vast and unknown forest. Hence the bewildering varieties of the systems of hilosophy.

All those historical systems of Western Civilization (we are not for the present interested in Eastern philosophy) may be conveniently divided into three periods:

1. The systems of the ancient Greek and Roman world, the chief of which were those of Plato and Aristotle.

2. The philosophical system of Scholasticism, which is nothing else but the system of Aristotle corrected and developed, so as to bring it into harmony with sound reason and the truths of Christianity by such profound thinkers as Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas of Aquin, and Duns Scotus.

3. The many systems that have sprung up in opposition to Scholasticism from the time of Descartes (1596-1650) to the present day. It is those latter systems that are known in history as "Modern Philosophy" or "Modern Thought." It is with the exposition, therefore, and criticism of these latter systems we are concerned in our present course. They, and not the ancient or mediæval systems, will form the subject matter of our present lectures.

In order that we may not be beating the air, but know *what* we are to study in, and *how* to study, each of those modern systems of philosophical thought, *what method shall we pursue?*

(*a*) The first topic that will engage our attention in the study of any school or system is the life, times, and personal character of its founder. It is a commonplace to say that, that which is most intimate in a man, namely, his character, which is nothing else but a habitual inclination of his will, gives to his thoughts and judgments a certain bias. It is most difficult for feeble human nature to preserve that equipoise of judgment, which, like a perfect balance, will unerringly weigh evidence and tilt only on the

side of truth. Hence a knowledge of the moral and religious character of each founder of a system, of his national and racial tendencies and prejudices, will be an invaluable guide to us, in forming a just estimate of his philosophical thought.

It is not enough to know the personal character of each founder of a system. We should also endeavor to know his environment, because a great leader or writer wins thousands to his views, not so much because *he* forms their opinions, but because he gives clear and systematic expression to the half-unconsciously formed opinions of the age in which he lives. To judge, then, of the value of a thought-system that gives form and expression to what is called the *Zeitgeist,* or spirit of the age, we should be acquainted with the intellectual, social, political, economic, and religious movements which dominate the times and country in which the founder of a system of thought lives. Thus did the philosophers of the Hebrew race at the time of Christ, biased by the prejudices of their times, call Christianity a "scandal," as the philosophers of Greece called it "foolishness."

(*b*) Having gleaned an insight into the character and the environment of the founder of the system of thought which we set ourselves to study, we are expected, in the second place, to become familiar with the fundamental principles of that system. The principles, of course, of each system will form the main topic of study. This knowledge can be acquired only by a frank and honest exposition of each system according to the mind of its founder. You are expected, then, to be as familiar with the successive steps in the up-building of each system, as you are with the rooms of your home.

Now, assuming that you have mastered the main outlines of each system as a whole, you are, in the

third place, expected to observe the links of though or logical connection that usually binds together preceding system with the system that succeeds it For, despite the diversity in the teachings of eac philosophical system, we shall discover that a certai inner connection exists between the different school of thought that succeed each other in time. The re sults attained by the earlier philosophers were no lost upon those who succeeded them. On the con trary, each founder of a new system makes the theo ries of his predecessors, should those theories be to hi mind satisfactorily established, the starting points o the new system. On the other hand, should the suc ceeding philosopher consider the findings of his pred ecessor insufficiently established or wholly false, th new system will set up, in opposition to the old, ne principles and new foundations. In a word, one o the most interesting aspects of this study of system will be to detect, in the lineaments of the newly-bor baby system, a resemblance to its parents.

We have now, in the last place, arrived at what w Catholics, deem of the highest importance in the studi of any system of thought that may engage our atten tion — namely, its *criticism*. That is, how far may w approve or disapprove of its teachings? Is the sy tem consistent with, or contradictory of, itself? Wha are the reasons that justify our judgment of it?

Now, profitable criticism has a double purpose. duly acknowledges and appreciates what is true an noble in a philosophical work, while at the same tim it will censure what is false. It will distinguish th laudable purpose of an author, from the means h may take to achieve that purpose. Criticism will poin out the influence of a philosopher for good or ev upon his contemporaries and future generations.

Now, praise or censure of a philosophical syste

implies in its critic a standard of judgment. What shall that standard be?

At first sight it seems a very simple matter to set up such a standard of judgment, and say that such a standard, of course, shall be the philosophy of life, which is unanimously held to be true. But, unfortunately, all people, even the so-called educated, are, by no means, unanimous in their adherence to any one philosophy of life, any more than they are unanimous in professing one religious belief. Suppose it were my good or evil fortune, as a philosopher, to have to lecture to a class, some of whom were professed Materialists, others Idealists, another group Atheists, still another Agnostics. My conclusions would be silently or vociferously contradicted by each group of my audience. If I established the existence of a soul or spirit in man, the Materialists would deny it; if I set forth the arguments for the existence of God, the Atheists and Agnostics would not accept them. If I asserted the independent existence of matter, the Idealists would be up in arms. Each group, then, would criticise any conclusion I may arrive at by the light, or may be the darkness, of their preconceived philosophy of life. Thoughtless people are fond of asserting that it is the Irish only that fight among themselves, whereas the truth is, that the smug, sleek philosophers, outside the Catholic Church, are continually cudgelling one another's conclusions with a passion and vigor that "out-Donnybrook" Donnybrook Fair. Where, then, shall you look for a standard whereby to pass a critical judgment on the different antagonistic systems that will come, in the course of your study of "Modern Thought", before the bar of your Reason?

Of course, it is usually admitted that the ultimate standard that is to decide the truth or falsehood of a

system of philosophy is the *evidence* that is presented for or against such a system before the judgment seat of reason, somewhat in the same way as a prisoner is declared guilty or not guilty by the *evidence* presented in a court of law. Our natural reason has no other test whereby we are able to distinguish truth from falsehood except the objective evidence that may be available to guide our judgment. For objective evidence is accepted as the ultimate criterion of truth.

If philosophers, then, would sift the evidence for a philosophy of life, free from the sway of preconceived bias or prejudice, in accord with the laws of reasoning, they would all arrive at the same solution of the vital problems of life, and all say the same thing, according to the Apostle. But history shows that, as a fact, philosophers have not done so, and if we may judge the future by the past, we are obliged to conclude that philosophers will never agree.

Is there any sun in the heavens, any star in the firmament to tell the philosophical mariner when his ship of reason strays from the course of truth and evidence? Is there given to men at least a *negative* standard of truth, when the *positive* standard of *evidence* becomes obscure either through carelessness in its examination, or because of some bias of mind? I mean by a *negative* standard of truth simply this — a standard of truth that will warn you that a philosophical system must be false, though it will not tell you the solution that is alone true.

Let me illustrate the nature of a *negative* standard of truth by a familiar example: Suppose you are a teacher. A pupil brings up to you his sum in addition wrongly cast up. You tell him his answer is wrong, you rub out that answer, and send him back to his seat to try again. Herein you are not interfering in the least with the rights of your pupil's reason, but, on

the contrary, requiring him to exercise reason rightfully. Now, the teacher, in the case, is for the pupil a *negative* standard of truth. *Negative,* because the teacher simply tells the pupil his answer *is not true.* Should the teacher tell the pupil the true answer, then that teacher would be a *positive* standard of truth for the pupil.

Now, is there given to philosophers a *negative* guide or *negative* standard, at least, to warn them when such conclusions of theirs as have a vital bearing on human life and conduct are wrong, and which will send them back to their studies, as the teacher did the child, to review more carefully their reasoning processes, with the view of arriving at the true solution? Of course, a child is naturally humble, and will not feel any risings of revolt when he is told his answer is wrong. But the philosophers are often haughty, and may stubbornly refuse to obey their *negative* guide and remain in error.

Now, I don't know any more important principle to take to heart at the very threshold of the study of the "History of Modern Systems of Thought", that may be fraught with danger for some, than this, namely, that all men are providentially furnished with at least a *negative* standard of truth to guide them to discern what is false, not in a sum of arithmetic, but in conclusions of philosophy. No greater calamity can befall anyone, than to be educated in a false philosophy. It shatters the very foundations of his intellectual, moral, and religious life. And this *negative* standard, which is to thought and science what the polar star is to the mariner, is the *divinely revealed truths of faith.* We frankly state, therefore, that the negative standard of criticism in passing judgment upon systems of philosophy is the *infallible and authoritative teaching of the Catholic faith.* Hence, any

conclusions of philosophers, or any professed scientific teaching that openly and clearly contradicts an infallible truth of our Catholic faith is forthwith to be rejected as false, and such philosophers or scientists who propose such conclusions are to be sent back to their seats, like school-children, to ponder over their evidence and scrutinize their reasoning processes, until they bring their conclusions into harmony with truths that are hedged round by the infallible authority of Christ and His Church, which is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Scholastic philosophy, the *"genuina philosophia perennis"*, has always recognized as eminently reasonable the moderating influence of divine revelation as a negative standard or test of truth, in benignantly preserving from error the wayward human reason.

But "freedom of thought and science" vehemently protests that the recognition of the authority of revealed faith and of the Catholic Church shackles the liberty of philosophy.

We answer that philosophy, scholastic or otherwise, even when it recognizes the authority of divine revelation as a negative mentor, enjoys all the liberty that is rightly its *due*, and therefore all the freedom which it can reasonably claim. Reason, as exercised by human beings, is clothed in all the features of creaturehood. It is not, and cannot be, in the nature of things, absolutely independent. Hence, if its Creator speaks and graciously reveals to reason certain truths, it is only reasonable that it should accord to those truths its submissive and unqualified assent. And since truth cannot contradict truth, it devolves on human reason to subject its native conclusions to divinely and infallibly revealed truth, rather than subject God-given truths to the proverbially fallible conclusions of reason. The latter attitude is not the exer-

cise of legitimate intellectual freedom. It is intellectual sedition. Hence the claim of the absolute independence of human reason, which is known as Rationalism, is in itself irrational and therefore self-destructive.

This fundamental principle of scholastic philosophy, namely, that it would be unreasonable to expect that a truth of divine revelation should yield to that professed to be a product of human reason has been advocated by even John Locke, who was neither a Catholic nor a Scholastic philosopher. He says:— "Whatever is divine revelation ought to overrule all our opinions, prejudices, and interests, and hath a right to be received with full assent. Such a submission as this, of our reason to faith, takes not away the landmarks of knowledge: this shakes not the foundation of reason, but leaves us that use of our faculties for which they were given us." (B. IV., C. XVIII., 10.)

Again Locke says:— " . . . . "there is one sort of propositions that challenge the highest degree of our assent upon bare testimony, whether the thing proposed agree or disagree with common experience, and the ordinary course of things, or no. The reason whereof is, because the testimony is of such an one as cannot deceive or be deceived; and that is of God Himself. This carries with it an assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception. This is called by a peculiar name, *Revelation,* and our assent to it, *faith,* which as absolutely determines our minds, and as perfectly excludes all wavering as our knowledge itself; and we may as well doubt of our own being as we can whether any revelation from God be true." (B. IV., C. XVI., 14.)

The principle enunciated above only emphasizes the law that truth has an indefeasible right to reign over

the intellect of man, and consequently the human intellect is in duty bound to submit to truth. And if the truth of divine revelation, once granted it as given, is not truth, what is? A declaration of independence by human reason against divine revelation would be arrogant because irrational, and an abuse of free-will. By submitting to duly accredited truth, the intellect is not enslaved, but liberated. On the contrary, human intellects that revolt against the truths of revelation are often already enslaved, because they usually work under the bidding of an illegitimate and disorderly passion — the passion which is dignified by many modern thinkers into an intellectual virtue — irresponsible free-thought.

Chapter I.

RENÉ DESCARTES

Chapter I.

RENÉ DESCARTES

(1596-1650)

IN the last lecture we have explained, by way of introduction to the "Philosophical Systems of Modern Thought", what is meant by (1) "philosophy", (2) by a "System" of philosophy, (3) and what systems in the history of philosophy are unanimously acknowledged as "modern".

We have likewise set forth the plan or method which we intend to follow in the study of each of those modern systems. We shall indicate (1) the chief events of the *life, and of the life-time, as well as the character* of the founder of each system. For the character of a man, as well as the stirring events which constitute the environment in which he lived, usually exert a powerful influence in moulding his views and opinions. We shall then (2) give an *exposition* of his philosophical principles as set forth in his writings. Then we shall (3) point out the logical connection between the different successive systems of thought, and lastly we shall (4) offer a *critical estimate of each system.* As philosophers, we shall make use of the light of evidence as the standard or test of our critical judgments and as Catholics we shall frankly reject any principle or opinion that openly contradicts the teaching of our faith, no matter how distinguished may be the reputation of the philosopher or scientist who may present that principle or opinion for our acceptance. Because, as we explained in the introduc-

tion, in a supposed conflict between the conclusions of philosophy or science, and a settled truth of revelation, it would be unreasonable to expect that the revealed truth should yield to what professed to be the product of reason.

Having completed the preliminary explanations, which were necessary for the better understanding of the subject that is to occupy our attention, we shall now enter into the study of that system of philosophy which first broke away from the tradition of Scholasticism, and inaugurated the period that is known in the history of philosophy as the rise of "Modern Thought." That system of philosophy, which is universally acknowledged as the herald of "Modern Thought", is known as Cartesianism. It was founded by René Descartes Duperron, who is popularly known as Descartes. (1596-1650.)

Our interest in, as well as the advantages to be derived from, a study of Descartes' philosophy do not arise from any intrinsic value of its principles, or of the body of doctrines embodied therein, but because his system places in our hands the key that will unlock, at their primal source, the understanding of the many false principles that have moulded the thought and guided the purposes of those men of intellect, whom the non-Catholic world has lauded as its great teachers for the last three hundred years. The best means of acquiring a knowledge of the fallacious principles that lie at the basis of the fantastic theories of so many modern thinkers is to examine the sources from which these erroneous principles originally sprang. "He who considers things in their growth and origin", says Aristotle, "will obtain the clearest view of them." And, strange to say, though Descartes was himself a pious Catholic, yet he has given to the world a system of philosophy that is, in a large measure, the original

source of those diseased germs of thought that have infected the philosophical systems of a large section of the intellectual world for the last three hundred years. It is this diseased thought of Descartes, accepted in whole or in part by so many modern philosophers in France, Germany, Italy, England, and America that has bred, as we shall see in the course of our study, the Materialism, the Atheism, Pantheism, and consequently the immorality of international, national, and domestic relations which is at the back of the restless confusion of the world to-day. It is true that philosophy alone, even were it solid and wholesome, could never and will never regenerate the world. But it is equally true that false philosophies will aggravate the tendency in human nature towards degeneracy.

Before entering, however, into the exposition and criticism of Descartes' philosophy, it will be helpful to know something of his life and character, that we may better evaluate the philosophical child of his brain.

Towards the close of the Sixteenth Century, 1596, twenty-four years before the *Mayflower* landed on Plymouth Rock, René Descartes (Duperron) was born at La Haye, in the Province of ~~Lorraine~~, Touraine, France. For the better understanding of Descartes' mentality and loyalty through life to the Catholic Church, it is not without significance to note that his parents were natives of celtic Brittany. Everybody knows that the Bretons, who gave so many distinguished men to France, are one of the most ancient, bravest and staunchest Catholic peoples in the continent of Europe.

A few days after his birth his mother died of some disease of the lungs. Inheriting, no doubt, her delicate health, he grew up a sickly boy, yet his mind was

so brilliant and inquisitive that at the age of eight he was called by his companions the "young philosopher". Up to the age of sixteen he was a pupil of the Jesuits in the famous college of La Fleche. Speaking in after years of his college days, he says, "I was studying in one of the most celebrated schools of Europe, in which I thought there must be learned men, if such were anywhere to be found. I had been taught all that others learned there; and, not contented with the sciences actually taught us, I had, in addition, read all the books that had fallen into my hands. I knew the judgments that others had formed of me; and I did find that I was not considered inferior to my fellows, although there were among them some who were already marked out to fill the places of our instructors". (*Method* I). He retained through life a deep attachment to his former Jesuit teachers; his only regret was their refusal to accept his philosophy.

Though his natural bent was towards Mathematics and Science (he wrote several works on Mathematics and Science), he was also an ardent student of literature. On leaving college at the age of sixteen (1612), he went to Paris, and for a time gave up all study. Of this period of his life he says: "As soon as my age permitted me to pass from under the control of my instructors, I entirely abandoned the study of letters and resolved no longer to seek any other science than the knowledge of myself and the great book of the world". While yet in Paris and towards the end of his teens, with a view of devoting his time to the study of self and his own thoughts, he formulated the great motto of his life,—*"Bene vivit qui bene latuit"* ("To live in close seclusion is the way to live well"), and having retired into seclusion in a lonely part of Paris, he again resumed his studies. During this time of in-

trospective brooding, even before his twenty-first year, like many another ambitious youth of inquisitive mind, he was obsessed by a passion for truth, but failed to discover what, for him, was a satisfactory ground for certainty either in the sciences or in the philosophy which he was taught in school. Hear his reflections on the philosophy of his time. He says, "Of Philosophy I will say nothing, except that I saw that it had been cultivated for many ages by the most distinguished men, and yet there is not a single matter within its sphere which is not still in dispute, and nothing therefore which is above doubt." (*Method* I.) His inquisitive and sensitive mind became, so to speak, the heir of all the confused ideas that had their origin in the so-called "Illumination" of the humanists of the Renaissance and of the Protestant Reformation. (*Hist. of Phil.,* Klimke, Vol. I., p. 303.) This confusion caused a wave of utter Scepticism to sweep over his soul. Harassed by his intellectual scruples, he resolved, at the age of twenty-one (1617), to obtain relief in travel and in the distractions of an active life.

"I spent," he says, "the remainder of my youth in travelling, in visiting courts and armies, in holding intercourse with men of different dispositions and ranks, in collecting varied experience." (*Method* I.) For this purpose he became a soldier. He served in the army of Prince Maurice in Holland and Germany and later under the Elector of Bavaria. It was at this period he visited Loretto to pray for light and deliverance from his painful doubts, at the famous Shrine of the Blessed Virgin. While he was living in winter quarters at Neuberg on the Danube, in his twenty-fourth year (1619-1620), the mental crisis of his life occurred. It was then he discovered what he thought would unlock all the mysteries of nature, and

lay a solid foundation for philosophical thought—his famous "Universal Methodic Doubt."

We find an exact statement of this "Universal Methodic Doubt" in his own words. He says, "Not that in my doubt I imitated the Sceptics who doubt only that they may doubt, and seek nothing beyond uncertainty itself; for, on the contrary, my design was simply to find ground of assurance, and cast aside the loose earth and sand that I may reach the rock or clay." (*Method* III.) Hence he intimates that the older Sceptics doubted for the sake of a doubt; Descartes doubted that he might ultimately reach certainty. The precise difference, then, between Descartes and the real Sceptics is, that the end or goal of all thinking for the real Sceptics was *doubt;* whereas the end or goal of Descartes' method was *certainty*. Descartes professed to make of his universal doubt a means or road to ultimate certainty. Hence did he call his doubt *methodic*. In order to establish beyond all cavil, that Descartes really doubted all and every truth—the testimony of the senses, of memory, consciousness, self-evident first principles or geometrical axioms and even the principle of contradiction, I shall quote his own words:

> "I will suppose, then, not that Deity, who is sovereignly good and the fountain of truth, but that some *malignant demon,* who is at once exceedingly potent and deceitful, has employed all his artifice to deceive me; I will suppose the sky, the air, the earth, colors, figures, sounds, and all external things are nothing better than illusions of dreams, by means of which this being has laid snares for my credulity. I will consider myself without hands, eyes, flesh, blood, or any of the senses, and as falsely believing that I am pos-

sessed of these; I will continue resolutely fixed in this belief and, if, indeed, by this means, it be not in my power to arrive at the knowledge of truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, namely, guard with settled purpose against giving my assent to what is false, and of being imposed upon by this deceiver, whatever be his power and artifice." (*Method* I.)

Descartes brooded over this methodic doubt from the time he left college (1612), when he was only sixteen, for the period of eight or nine years, partly spent in retirement in Paris, partly in the active service of a soldier's life, but so far, he had not as yet published to the world the results of his long investigations. It was only in 1629, when he was thirty-three years of age, that he retired to Holland, and there published for the first time his philosophical works — the famous *Discourse on Method* (1637), his *Principles of Philosophy* (1641), and his *Meditations* (1644). These works attracted the attention of the philosophical world, and made of Descartes a storm center of controversy during the rest of his life. His name became European.

At the invitation of Queen Christina of Sweden, who admiringly read his works, he went to Stockholm in 1649. The Queen was so pleased with him that she earnestly begged him to remain at her court and give his assistance towards the establishment of an Academy of Sciences. But the delicate frame of Descartes was ill-fitted for the severity of the climate, and a cold, caught in one of his morning visits to Christina, developed into pneumonia, which caused his death in the beginning of the year 1650, at the comparatively early age of fifty-four. Christina wept for him, had him interred in the cemetery for foreigners and placed a

long eulogium upon his tomb. His remains were subsequently (1666) carried from Sweden to France and buried with great ceremony in St. Genevieve in Paris. Such, briefly, is the life of Descartes, truly the doubting Thomas of Modern Philosophy.

Chapter II.

DESCARTES

EXPOSITION OF HIS PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM

1. Its Destructive Aspect:

In an age when the Catholic Church was involved in a life and death struggle with the Protestant Reformation in Europe, it was natural that the intellectual leaders of the insurgent religious sects should have hailed with delight and acclamation the brilliant young student of the Jesuits as the "deliverer", the "emancipator" and the new "Luther of Philosophy", because he deliberately abandoned scholasticism — the traditional philosophy of the Catholic Church, and founded a new philosophical system, which the innovators deemed more in harmony with the principles which they advocated, and which thus inaugurated a new era in the history of human thought.

What, then, was this new philosophy which Descartes gave to the world? In its exposition we shall adhere as faithfully as we possibly can to the mind of Descartes by quotations from his own works, and then offer an estimate and criticism of his system.

The philosophical system of Descartes falls naturally into two parts, its (1) *destructive,* and (2) *constructive* aspect.

The destructive portion of Descartes' System. Descartes, with the best of intentions undoubtedly, set on foot a new method in philosophy which

would, as he hoped, restore certainty and intellectual peace regarding God, the soul, religion and morality, to the sceptical and restless world of his time, which was thrown into confusion by the radical philosophy of the Renaissance, and by the more recent turmoil of the Reformation. Having "read", as he himself tells us, "everything that fell into his hands" during the youthful years of his college career, when he was not yet mature enough to discriminate between what was genuine and what was spurious, his mind naturally became a prey to doubt and confusion. To get rid of doubt and rebuild on new foundations the entire edifice of philosophy, he imagined that he should break completely with that system of philosophy that swayed the learned world during "the ages of faith". He despaired of scholasticism. "I saw", he says, "that philosophy has been cultivated for many ages by the most distinguished men, and that yet there is not a single matter within its sphere which is not still in dispute, and nothing therefore which is above doubt". (*Meth.* 1.)

As a preparatory attitude of mind, then, to the erection of the new edifice of philosophy which he ultimately ambitioned to build, he deliberately adopted ("I shall be my own deceiver") a mental state of positive doubt, not only towards all previous philosophical systems, but also towards all the knowledge which he himself had naturally and spontaneously acquired during his life-time. He swept from his mind every item of knowledge by the merciless broom of doubt.

"As for the opinions", he says, "which up to that time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than resolve at once to sweep them wholly away, that I might afterwards be in a position to admit either others more correct, or even perhaps the

same, when they had undergone the scrutiny of reason. (*Meth.* II.)

All his previous knowledge, he, therefore, doubted, not merely by a negative, but by a real, positive doubt; that is, he supported his doubt by *positive reasons.* His purpose or aim in knowledge was not, however, that he might remain irrevocably in a state of doubt, but the aim of his universal doubt was ultimately to arrive at incontestable certainty. Hence his mental state of doubt, as he himself asserts, was not "sceptical", that is, in order to remain forever in doubt, but "methodic", namely, with the view of making doubt a road or pathway along which his mind was to travel to truth and certainty.

"Not", says he, "in this (doubt) I imitated the Sceptics, who doubt only that they may doubt, and seek nothing beyond uncertainty itself; for, on the contrary, my design was simply to find ground of assurance, and cast aside the loose earth and sand, that I may reach the rock or clay". (*Meth.* III.)

Now, that we understand more in detail the full sweep of Descartes' doubt, we will briefly enumerate the different spheres of true and certain knowledge, which the ordinary normal person, in mature life, usually accepts, for the most part at least, as reliable, and then examine whether Descartes *really* and *positively* doubted his already acquired knowledge in each of these spheres.

The ordinary departments of certain knowledge, which the natural workings of the mind spontaneously deliver to the intelligent man in the street, are as follows:

(1) All men have an unconquerable conviction of the truth of immediate judgments based on the reports of the external and internal senses.

(2) Of first principles or axioms.

(3) Of conclusions or correct reasonings derived from previously known and certain premises.

(4) Of laws which govern phenomena or facts, arrived at by the process of inductive reasoning.

(5) Knowledge derived from the testimony of witnesses.

(6) Of internal, mental facts revealed by consciousness.

(1) That Descartes positively doubted, in the first place, all judgments that are based on the reports of the external senses is manifest from the passage which has been already quoted in Chapter I., p. 26. The following passage, likewise, supplies additional reasons for positively doubting the reports both of his internal and external senses:

"I observed that the senses sometimes misled us; and it is a part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been deceived". (*Medit.* I.)

"But it may be said, perhaps, that although the senses occasionally mislead us, respecting minute objects, and such as are so far removed from us as to be beyond the reach of close observation, there are yet many other of their informations of the truth of which it is manifestly impossible to doubt; as, for example, that I am in this place, seated by the fire, clothed in a winter dressing gown, that I hold in my hand this piece of paper. But how could I deny that I possess these hands and this body, and withal escape being classed with persons in a state of insanity, whose brains are so disordered and clouded by dark, bilious vapors as to cause them pertinaciously to assert that they are monarchs when they are in greatest poverty, or clothed in gold and purple when destitute of any covering; or that their head is made of clay, their

body of glass, or that they are gourds? I should certainly be not less insane than they, were I to regulate my procedure according to examples so extravagant". He forthwith makes answer to this objection, thus:—

"Though this be true", he continues, "I must nevertheless here consider that I am a man, and that, consequently, I am in the habit of sleeping and representing to myself in dreams those same things, or even sometimes others less probable, which the insane think are presented to them in their waking moments. How often have I dreamt that I was in these familiar circumstances, that I was dressed and occupied this place by the fire, when I was lying in bed. At the present moment I certainly look upon this paper with eyes open; this head which I now move is not asleep; I extend consciously this hand, and I perceive it; the occurrences of sleep are not so distinct as all this. But I cannot forget that, at other times, I have been deceived in sleep by similar illusions, and attentively considering these cases, *I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep,* that I feel greatly astonished, and in amazement *I almost persuade myself that I am now dreaming!* Let us suppose then that we are dreaming, and that all those particulars, namely, the opening of the eyes, the motion of the head, the putting forth of the hands, are merely illusions, and that we really possess neither an entire body nor hands such as we see". (*Medit.* I.)

His argument for really doubting the testimony of his senses is, then, simply this: We are just as certain the objects of our dreams really exist outside of us, though they are illusions, as we are of the existence of sense-objects in our waking moments. Why, then, may not our life be a continuous dream, since, as he says, *there are no certain marks* to distinguish dream-

ing from waking? Descartes, furthermore, confirms his doubt of the testimony of his senses by this additional reflection, which anticipates Berkeley, "The belief", he says, "that there is a God Who is all-powerful, and Who created me such as I am, has for a long time obtained steady possession of my mind. How, then, do I know that He has not arranged that there should be neither earth, nor sky, nor any extended thing, nor magnitude, nor place, providing at the same time, however, *for the rise in me of perceptions of all these objects and the persuasion that these do not exist otherwise than as I perceive them?*" (*Medit.* I.)

Thus did Descartes bring himself to a real positive doubt of all objects of the senses, and destroy one of the foundations of certain knowledge.

(2) In the second place, he now proceeds to bring into positive doubt the first principles or axioms of the ideal order:

"Whether I am awake or dreaming, it remains true that two and three make five, and that a square has but four sides; nor does it seem possible that truths so apparent can ever fall under suspicion of falsity or uncertainty".

"Nevertheless, as I sometimes think that others are in error regarding matters of which *they believe themselves to possess a perfect knowledge,* how do I know that I am not also deceived each time I add together two and three, or number the sides of a square, or form some judgment still more simple, if more simple, indeed, can be imagined?" (*Medit.* I.)

Descartes reached the final climax of positive doubt when he supposed that he might be under the influence of some "malignant demon" who was ever employing all his artifices to deceive him. He says, "I

will suppose, then, not that Deity, who is sovereignly good and the fountain of truth, but some *malignant demon,* who is at once exceedingly potent and deceitful, has employed all his artifice to deceive me; I will suppose the sky, the air, the earth, colors, figures, sounds, and all external things are nothing better than illusions of dreams, by means of which this being has laid snares for my credulity. I will consider myself without hands, eyes, flesh, blood, or any of the senses and as falsely believing that I am possessed of these; I will continue resolutely fixed in this belief, and, if, indeed, by this means, it be not in my power to arrive at the knowledge of truth, I shall at least do what is in my power, namely, guard with settled purpose against giving my assent to what is false, and of being imposed upon by this deceiver, whatever be his power and artifice". (*Method* I.) This supposition of a "malignant demon", which Descartes seemed to have seriously entertained, would relegate to positive doubt the deliverances of all his cognitive faculties. It is difficult to understand, in the face of this supposition, how he could ever trust the two great sources of knowledge, his *senses* and *reason,* yea, his consciousness. Because it is at least conceivable that all his cognitive faculties are of such a nature that even their right use leads to doubt.

Thus did Descartes pluck from his mind every shred of certain knowledge he ever possessed, whether through the exercise of his senses, which seemed to put him in touch with the external world of matter, or through the exercise of his intellect, in cognising first principles, and deliberately plunged himself into the murky darkness of *universal doubt,* and paralyzed all his faculties.

(5) What was Descartes' attitude towards knowl-

edge which well-balanced people acknowledge may be acquired through the testimony of witnesses, or through the authority of historical evidence?

In answer to this question we may legitimately argue, without appealing at all to Descartes' writings, that since the testimony of witnesses depends upon the reports of what is perceived by the senses, and since Descartes rejected, or at least doubted the reports of his senses, any testimony which witnesses may give is discredited by him, for the simple reason that untrustworthy senses can yield only untrustworthy testimony.

Let us, however, consult the views of Descartes himself, on what he thought of the reliability of human testimony. On this question he writes:

"Even the most faithful histories", he says, "if they do not wholly misrepresent matters or exaggerate their importance to render the account of them more worthy of perusal, omit, at least, almost always, the meanest and least striking of the attendant circumstances; hence it happens that the remainder does not represent the truth, and that such as regulate their conduct by examples drawn from this source, are apt to fall into the extravagance of the knight-errants of romance, and to entertain projects that exceed their powers". (*Meth.* I.) In this passage Descartes relegates history to the region of positive doubt.

(3) (4) What of the third and fourth departments of knowledge? Did Descartes really doubt of conclusions arrived at by his faculty of reason, whether by deduction or induction?

In answer to this question there are two phases of the problem which must be kept apart. First, did Descartes positively doubt about all the actual *output* of all the knowledge about God, man, and the mate-

rial world, which had been delivered to mankind by the exercise of reason, up to his time? Secondly, did he positively doubt of the *capacity* of reason itself to ever deliver to him or anybody else any reliable knowledge? In other words, did he doubt of the very *possibility* of ever attaining to true and certain knowledge?

Regarding the first phase of the problem, Descartes did positively doubt all the knowledge which both his own and other men's reasoning had previously delivered to the world. "I am constrained", he says, "at last to avow that there is nothing of all that I formerly believed to be true, of which it is impossible to doubt, *and that not through thoughtlessness or levity, but from cogent and maturely considered reasons*". (*Meth.* I.)

With regard to the second phase of the problem, it is obvious that the above expression of *universal positive doubt* implicitly contains, of course, a positive doubt regarding any and every particular item of knowledge; and since the capacity of reason to acquire truth and certainty is an item of knowledge, it follows that Descartes' expressed universal doubt involves even this item. Hence, he doubted the capacity of reason to acquire any certain knowledge.

On the other hand, there are numerous passages in his writings which express the utmost confidence in the trustworthiness of his reason. Indeed, Descartes so exaggerated the power of reason that he made of it a fetish. For instance, he says: "As for the opinions which up to that time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than resolve at once to sweep them wholly away, that I might afterwards be in a position to admit either others more correct, or even perhaps the same, when they had undergone the scrutiny of reason". (*Meth.* II.)

There is in this passage an implied trust in the ability of his reason. How could he admit back again, by a process of scrutinizing them by his reason, opinions which he rejected as doubtful, if he did not trust the capacity of his reason to judge infallibly of their truth?

Again he writes: "I further concluded that it is almost impossible that our judgments can be so correct or solid as they would have been, had our reason been mature from the moment of our birth, *and had we been guided by it alone*". (*Meth.* II.) Here he certainly implies that judgments arrived at by mature reason are more correct and solid than those that satisfy immature reason. Does not this carry with it an implication of trust in mature reason?

In another passage he says: "I could, however, select from the crowd no one whose opinions seemed worthy of preference, and thus I found myself constrained, as it were, to use *my own reason* in the conduct of my life". (*Medit.* II.) He distrusts, in this passage, opinions based on the reason of all other people, but pins his trust to his own individual reason. Therefore, we must conclude that Descartes trusted his own individual reason to attain truth.

Now, if we compare Descartes' profession of positive doubt with regard to all the knowledge he and other men previously acquired with the above quotations, wherein Descartes seems to have the utmost confidence in the capacity of his reason, we arrive at this peculiar position of Descartes regarding the trustworthiness of his reason. His *all inclusive universal doubt* (cf. *Med.* I. above) about all previous knowledge would lead to the conclusion that his reason never previously in his life functioned correctly, while his own assertions, in the quotations we have presented, would lead one to believe that he still had

confidence, that, though reason heretofore in his experience delivered only doubtful conclusions, yet it still has the power in the future to deliver true and certain conclusions. In a word, he doubted all conclusions of his own and other men's reason in the world up to this time; but still trusted the inherent power of his own faculty of reason to function aright under more favorable circumstances. What Descartes really and explicitly doubted of, then, was the results of reasoning, not the *capability* of reason to attain certainty and truth. But if this was Descartes' mind concerning reason, his position was illogical and false. In the first place, if the functioning of his own and other men's reasoning had brought forth, during the past, doubtful conclusions alone, such a strange result would argue *inherent vitiation* of the faculty of reason itself. A tree is known by its fruit. If reason throughout all time before Descartes bore only doubt, we must conclude that it was a faculty whose intrinsic nature it is to doubt. If reason, then, is *intrinsically* a faculty of doubt, Descartes contradicts what seems to be his trust in the capacity of reason to bring forth certainty under any circumstances.

Furthermore, unless Descartes admitted the truth and certainty of axiomatic principles, such as the principle of contradiction, he could never reason at all. For the truth and certainty of the principle of contradiction must be supposed in every act of reasoning. If this principle is doubted, reason cannot function aright; and a faculty or power that cannot function is not a power at all. It is nullified, annihilated as a power. When, therefore, Descartes really doubted the principle of contradiction, and thus seriously thought that the same identical judgment could be true and not true at the same time and under the same respect, he should have ceased from, and stopped

short of ever exercising his reason. For any exercise of reason is an impossibility until the principle of contradiction is implicitly at least admitted. In really doubting, then, the principle of contradiction, Descartes paralyzed his reasoning function, and were he logical, he should have suspended all exercise of reasoning. That Descartes really doubted the principle of contradiction is manifest from the quotation cited on page 26.

Our judgment of Descartes, then, with regard to his position on reasoning is, that though he did not in practice doubt the ability of his reason to arrive at truth and certainty, he should have logically doubted it, folded his arms, if he had any, and stare forever, through the sightless eyes of his reason, into the perpetual darkness of nescience.

So far our examination of Descartes' doubt has brought forth these results: he really doubted the reports of his senses, testifying to the existence of his own body and the external world; secondly, he doubted of the first self-evident principles of knowledge, *and ought to have doubted, were he logical,* the capacity of his reason to reach truth and certainty.

Thus has Descartes blotted out from all the findings of sense, from all the findings of reason, both deductive and inductive, from all the testimony of witnesses, every mark of certainty. Every beam of truth and certainty that emanates for ordinary people, from the powers of sense, reason and witnesses, is shorn clear away.

(6) One lone department yet remains intact out of the wreck of Descartes' previously acquired edifice of knowledge. This department is his own *consciousness.* By consciousness is meant that immediate knowledge which we have of our own thoughts and

states of mind; in general, of all present operations of the mind. We not only *feel,* but we *know* that we feel; we *not only act,* but we *know* that we *act;* we not only *think,* but we *know* that we *think,* and that the feeling, knowing, thinking and acting are my own.

One characteristic of consciousness must be emphasized. In the first place, it is not the thought or the feeling or the act or the purpose itself that is *conscious* of itself, but it is *I,* the *Ego,* that is *conscious* of my thought or feeling or act or purpose, or of any other present subjective experience. It is "I", therefore, who is conscious of the present mental states that are murmuring through me. It is not "the stream of consciousness" that is conscious of itself. Hence, to talk of a stream of consciousness wherein the stream is the conscious agent, and not I myself, as William James did, is an absurdity because an impossibility. Much less is it true to say, as the same author taught, that a subsequent thought or state of mind could be conscious of a thought or mental state that just preceded it. This latter doctrine was also invented by William James, in order to destroy the ever-abiding existence, in the midst of change, of our own substantial personality, and thus pave the way for the fashionable doctrines of Phenomenal Idealism, which is expressed by the charming phrase of a "stream of consciousness". Phenomenal Idealism would have us believe that nothing exists but states of consciousness without any permanently existing person or "Ego" who is conscious of them, and who brings into unity all our disparate internal experience. Without this unifying, substantial "Ego", our conscious experiences would be like "so many beads without a string".

Now we have at last arrived at the interesting and critical point of Descartes' methodic doubt. The

forces of doubt, of real positive doubt, have, like an invading army, swarmed across the frontiers of knowledge. Those ruthless hosts have so far captured and laid waste the fairest provinces of human knowledge. Fortresses of truth and certainty that were for centuries deemed impregnable — the senses, first principles, reason and the testimony of witnesses — have been shattered, and the flag of doubt flung above them. One, and one only, strategic position yet blocks the way of the onward sweep of the triumphant hordes of doubt. *That one strong position are the objects of consciousness.* Will the retreating armies of knowledge and truth rally in their might around the stronghold of consciousness and hurl back the doubting invaders, and repeat for consciousness the story of a Marathon or a Salamis, a Fontenoy or a Marne? The critical moment has arrived. The advanced armies of doubt are already opening their attack upon the outer fortresses of consciousness. Should doubt be victorious over consciousness — the last hope of knowledge, so far as Descartes is concerned, truth and certainty will be no more. It was once said that "Freedom shrieked as ~~Kosiosko~~ fell". Truly would knowledge shriek should consciousness fail. Confusion and despair would ever more dominate the human mind. On the other hand, if the fortress of consciousness can repel doubt, and the truth and certainty of what it reveals be victoriously defended, then is it Descartes' hope to make of his consciousness the basis of his operations, roll back, step by step, the doubting invaders, and set up once more the benign sovereignty of the queen of truth and certainty, over all those fair provinces which had yielded to doubt only a temporary sway. This was to be Descartes' plan of campaign as set forth in his "Methodic Doubt". We do not now say whether that

plan was justifiable or not. But it was Descartes' plan. It was a curious application of "She Stoops to Conquer". Yes, truth stooped to doubt that she might finally vanquish doubt upon the ramparts of *Consciousness.* Let us describe the conflict in Descartes' own words: "But how do I know that there is not something different altogether from the objects I have enumerated, of which it is impossible to entertain the slightest doubt? Is there not a God, or some being, by whatever name I may designate Him, who causes those thoughts to arise in my mind? But why suppose such a being, for it may be I myself am capable of producing them? (Here he includes in his doubt the very existence of bodies and of God.) Am I, then, at least, not something? But I before denied that I possess senses or a body; I hesitate, however, for what follows from that. Am I so dependent upon the body and the senses, that without these I cannot exist? But I had the persuasion that there was absolutely *nothing in the world,* that there was no sky and no earth, *neither minds nor bodies.* Was I not, therefore, at the same time, persuaded I did not exist? Far from it; I assuredly existed, since I was persuaded. But there is, I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning (the malignant demon) who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. (Notice how fiercely he is fighting the battle of consciousness against doubt.) Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived, and let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition, 'I am, I exist', is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind". (*Method* II.) We shall afterwards examine whether Descartes was logical in

thus absolutely trusting the testimony of consciousness. That is, was Descartes consistent, in the face of other principles, in trusting his consciousness, while he persistently distrusted all his other cognitive faculties? It is hard to understand why it is reasonable to reject the normal testimony of all other natural faculties of knowledge, and accord to consciousness, which is on the same plain of nature as the other faculties, an absolute trust. If there "is a repugnance in conceiving that what thinks does not exist at the very time when it thinks", a "repugnance", indeed, which is admitted by all, so also is there a repugnance in thinking that it is doubtful "whether two and three make five", and yet Descartes positively doubted of the latter. Does it not seem that he should, were he consistent, also have doubted the former? We fear that Descartes sacrificed consistency upon the altar of his universal positive doubt.

Here is another account of the conflict in Descartes' words:

"While we thus reject all of which we can entertain the smallest doubt, and even imagine that it is false, we easily, indeed, suppose that there is neither God, nor sky, nor bodies, and that we ourselves have neither hands nor feet, nor, finally, a body, but we cannot in the same way suppose that we *are not,* while we doubt of the truth of those things; for there is a repugnance in conceiving that what thinks does not exist at the very time when it thinks. Accordingly, the knowledge, "I think, therefore, I exist" (*Cogito, ergo sum*), *is the first and most important certain principle* that occurs to me, who philosophize orderly". (*Princip.* VII.)

Descartes has, to his own satisfaction, at least, fought and won. The long career of dreary doubt is at an end. One truth certainly is established, which

no doubt can shake, no scepticism can shatter, "I doubt (I think), therefore, I exist". This truth, which he confidently thought that consciousness had revealed to him, Descartes has rescued from the slough of doubt; he has placed it as the foundation-stone of his philosophy. It is a truth revealed to him by his own consciousness.

Descartes was not the first to discover and recognize, that the incontestable truth of the great fact, "I exist", is established by my consciousness that I think. Aristotle and St. Augustine, centuries before, recognized the truth of the same fact. But to Descartes belongs the undying merit of emphasizing and expressing admirably and tersely this great principle and fact, *"Cogito, ergo sum"*.

Chapter III.

Exposition of his Philosophical System

II. Its Constructive Aspect:

We now understand how it came to pass that Descartes professed to have emerged from the dark night of doubt into the light of certainty. He doubted positively, or thought he could so doubt, all objective realities in the existing order of things which ordinary men accept as certainties.

The testimony of his own inner consciousness, however, to the incontestible fact that he doubted, defied every effort of his to doubt. He could not, even if he would, doubt that he doubted. But to doubt, he argued, is to think. Now, "I think" that is, "I doubt" necessarily involves that the "doubter", that is, the "thinker", exists. Because a mere nothing could not doubt or think. Therefore, am I something outside of nothing? This single item of knowledge, *"cogito, ergo sum"*, "I think, therefore, I exist", and this alone, Descartes saved from the wreck of doubt. The dawn-light of this famous principle dispelled the darkness of his universal doubt. Descartes thus describes the coming of light:

"Whilst I wished that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I who thus thought, should be somewhat, and I observed the truth, 'I think, hence I exist' was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it." (*Meth.*

IV.) That we know for certain the truth of our own existence, as the first fact in knowledge is incontestable. All sane philosophers admit it.

It may be a subject of wonder for minds not accustomed to philosophical problems to think that it took Descartes twenty years to establish his own existence. But philosophy has always to do with that which is ultimate and fundamental both in reality (metaphysics) and knowledge (epistemology).

Having at last, then, dug down through "earth and sand", as he expressed it, to what he deemed to be the foundation principle of all philosophy, Descartes confidently proceeds to evolve from this principle, step by step, the whole edifice of his system. Descartes, so characteristically French, was obsessed by a passion for logical system and mathematical precision. This tendency was heightened by his mathematical bent of mind. He was a profound mathematician. Just, then, as a geometrician gradually builds up, by the aid of a few axiomatic principles, all the propositions implicit in the nature of the ordinary figures of quantity, so it was Descartes' hope to find his whole system of philosophy *implicitly* contained in his first principle. It was, then, his ambition, after the manner of the mathematicians, to draw out logically those implications of that principle by processes of *a priori* reasoning, and thus evolve a complete system of philosophy from a single principle, as nature evolves a massive tree from a single, tiny seed. Such an achievement is in itself an impossibility. Because sciences, philosophy included, are based upon independent facts of experience revealed to us by different cognitive faculties, facts which cannot be derived one from the other by a process of *a priori* reasoning. Still Descartes regarded the method of mathematics as the type of the method of philosophy.

We shall, however, give an exposition of Descartes' attempt to accomplish this feat, and subject each section, as well as the whole of his system, to rational criticism, with the view of rejecting what is opposed to sound reason, and mayhap recommending for your instruction what may be worthy of approval.

Of course, Descartes, in the elaboration of his system, endeavored to reconstruct, on a new plan, every department of philosophical science. He inaugurated, therefore, a new departure in Epistemology, in Psychology, in Ontology, in Cosmology, and in Natural Theology.

Descartes, in his philosophical writings, did not, however, divide the expositions of his system into each of those departments into which the science of philosophy is set forth in modern treatises. We shall, therefore, set forth before your intellectual vision the main outlines of his philosophical edifice, and viewing it as a whole, we can then study how radically he has departed from the traditional Epistemology, Psychology, Ontology, Cosmology and Natural Theology that has come down to us embodied in the philosophy of the great mediæval thinkers.

The following, then, is a summary of his complete system: Descartes, as you may have observed, professed to have discovered his first true and certain item of knowledge by looking *within* himself. He observed that his own conscious state of doubt could not by an effort be doubted. And because he was absolutely certain that he doubted, he immediately arrived at the certain truth of his own existence, because doubt necessarily implies the existence of a doubter. Thus it was, that by knowing himself, he came for the first time in touch with objective reality. This first truth, "I think, therefore, I exist", he set down as the foundation-stone of his system.

On the other hand, when he looked *out of himself* through his senses, his intellect, or his reason, or when he consulted the testimony of witnesses, he despairingly confessed and professed that he could not know with certainty any objective reality outside and independent of himself. He positively doubted the existence of all reality outside of himself. Real objects outside of himself *seemed,* he confessed, to exist. Of their *seeming* existence he was certain. But his certainty stopped short with the mere *"seeming"*. "At all events, it is certain", he says, "that I *seem* to see light, (I *seem* to) hear noise, and (I *seem* to) feel heat; this cannot be false, and this is what in me is properly called perceiving (sentire)". . . . The best he can be certain of, then, is the *seeming* existence of objects outside of him, not the real existence of objects in themselves. Descartes himself, at this stage in the construction of his system, stood alone in the universe as the only reality of which he was certain.

Descartes, studying the character of the judgment, "I think, therefore, I exist", asked himself, why is it that this truth is to me most certain? Because, he asserted, it is so *clear and distinct.* This characteristic of his own existence he then generalized and set up as the criterion, standard or test of all truth. Therefore, he argued, *whatever idea is clear and distinct to me* is true and certain.

By the aid of this criterion he proceeded to advance his knowledge beyond that of his own existence, towards the acquisition of other truths which he called eternal, such as (*a*) "from nothing, nothing can come", (*b*) "it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be, at the same time, (*c*) "a cause ought at least to contain as much perfection as is contained in its effect", etc. Then, by the aid of the same criterion, he

advanced to the knowledge of God's existence, and lastly to the existence of external, material world.

He proceeds thus: (1) Amongst the various ideas which I find within myself, there is the idea of God, as a Being of infinite perfection. Such an idea, he argues, could not come from myself, since I am an imperfect being and therefore finite. The cause, then, of this idea of an infinitely perfect God that is within me cannot come from myself. It must come from a being of infinite perfection, namely, God Himself, therefore God exists. (2) Furthermore, Descartes maintained that, the *idea* of God, being infinite, contains all perfections. But "existence" is a perfection. Therefore God exists.

Having now arrived to his own satisfaction, at least, at the knowledge of God's existence, who is a Being that is *all-truthful and wise* because perfect, he then argues from the truth of an all-true and wise God, to the certainty of the existence of the external, material world. Because, he says, we clearly and distinctly perceive matter distinct from our Ego and from God extended in three dimensions — length, breadth and depth. God, then, would be our deceiver, if notwithstanding our clear and distinct ideas of material things, if the external, material world did not really exist. But God, who is infinitely true and wise, could not deceive me. Therefore, the external world exists. Thus did Descartes win back from his original doubt the certainty, not only the certainty of his own existence, and of the eternal truths mentioned above, but also of the existence of the material world.

But our knowledge must not rest here. He has established his own existence, the existence of God, and that of the material world, but he does not yet know either his own *essence* or that of bodies outside of him. This question Descartes was obliged to answer, be-

cause it is the part of philosophy to know the essences of things.

Now, if we are to understand Descartes, we must carefully bear in mind, in the first place, that, in his system, the direct and immediate objects, which his cognitive faculties, his senses as well as his intellect become directly and immediately aware of in cognition, are not objects that exist outside of himself, but his *ideas* within himself, something, therefore, subjective and not objective. In other words, our ideas are the direct objects that immediately terminate all our first cognitions. And in the second place, that it is only when those ideas are clear and distinct, do the objects, which they seem to represent, truly and certainly exist outside of us. Because, as he said, God placed in us an irresistible conviction that objects outside of us, of which we have clear and distinct ideas, exist, and an all-truthful and wise God could not deceive us.

Descartes then distinguishes three kinds of clear and distinct ideas within him, namely, the idea of *substance,* the idea of *attribute* and the idea of *mode or accident.* The idea of "substance" he defines as the idea of "that which so exists that it is in need of nothing else for its existence". An idea of a "mode or accident" he defines as "that which does not exist in itself, but in a substance, but which can be present or absent without destroying the idea of the substance". An "attribute" he defines as "that without which the idea of substance, itself, would cease to exist". Hence a "mode or accident" may cease to exist without the idea of substance, in which it adheres, ceasing to exist. But if an "attribute" ceased to exist, then, the idea of the substance, of which it is an attribute, could not exist at all. The idea of "attribute" to the mind of Descartes enters into the very essence of the idea of

"substance", the idea of a "mode or accident" does not.

Furnished, then, with those three clear and distinct ideas, he proceeds to establish the essence of body and of own *Ego* or "I".

Descartes now declares that *bodies* manifest themselves to us by the qualities of figure, shape, size, motion, color, etc. But all those qualities may change and any special figure, shape, size, motion or color, etc., may cease to exist without destroying the idea of a body. They are merely "modes or accidents" of body. They come and go. But without extension, I cannot conceive body at all. Therefore, *extension* is a necessary and essential quality or "attribute" of corporeal substance. And because such an attribute manifests the essence of body, therefore Descartes maintained that the *essence of a body consists in extension alone.* Since, then, a body is extension and only extension, a vacuum cannot exist, because a vacuum would be extension without a body. But extension is identical with a body, hence wherever extension is conceived, there is body. Consequently, since he conceived extension to be indefinite, if not infinite, so is matter indefinite, if not infinite, and can be infinitely divided.

All changes in matter are only the result of *local motion.* Whence comes this motion? Motion cannot originate in matter, since matter is not extension and extension does not imply motion. In fact, he taught that matter was entirely inert and void of all activity. Therefore motion must have its origin from a source distinct from matter. Descartes, therefore, accounts for motion by saying that God endowed matter in the beginning with a certain quantity of motion. This original quantity of motion, imparted to matter in the beginning by God, is immutable. All bodies,

therefore, are merely extension; that is, length, breadth and depth in motion, like a machine. Hence comes the famous theory of Descartes regarding matter, which is known as *Mechanism.* All inorganic bodies, as well as plants, animals and the body of man are only machines (automatons) just like our clocks and watches,—merely matter endowed with motion. All the motions of the animals, which we are wont to interpret as the signs of life, even their cries and bellowings, their digestion and apparent sensations do not spring from any vital principle, but are merely automatic motions of their bodily machines. "Give me matter and the laws of motion", says Descartes, "and I build a universe exactly like the one that we behold, with skies, stars, sun, and earth, and on the earth minerals, plants and animals, in short, everything that experience introduces to us, except the rational soul of man". Descartes does not admit any vital principles or soul in animals, because, as we shall afterwards see, the essence of soul, according to him, consists of *thought,* and hence every soul is a "thinking thing", immaterial and immortal, and endowed with free-will. But Descartes could not admit that animals are immortal, which he would be obliged to admit, did he admit they possessed a living principle, called soul.

Let us now examine what Descartes considered the essence of his own "Ego" or I, which he established as existing, and placed as the basic truth and certainty of his philosophy.

When Descartes, to his own satisfaction, had established, beyond any shadow of doubt, his own existence and called himself as we call ourselves, "I" or "Ego", his next step was to investigate what this "I", this "Ego" is, what constitutes it, what is its nature, in a word, "What am I?" When I say "I", do I mean

my soul alone, or my body alone, or a composite being made up of the intimate union of both body and soul"? This question Descartes presumes to answer by the following course of reasoning:

"In the next place", he says, "I certainly examined *what I was* and as I observed that I could suppose I had no body (he had not at this stage of his system established the existence of matter or body) and that there was no material world or any place that I might be; but that I could not, therefore, suppose that I was not; and that, on the contrary, from the very circumstance that I thought to doubt of the truth of other things, it most clearly and certainly followed that I was; while, on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although other objects which I had ever imagined, had been in reality existent, I would have not reason *to believe that I existed;* I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists *only* in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing, so that 'I', *that is to say the mind* by which I am what I am, is plainly distinct from the body". (*Meth.* IV.)

This is a remarkable passage. It contains the kernel of Descartes' psychology. It professes to answer the question, "What am I?". That you may vividly grasp this Cartesian answer to the formidable question, "What am I?", permit me to cull from this passage its salient phrases:

He says: "I, that is to say, the mind". In this phrase he identifies "I", "Ego", with the mind, that is, with my soul or spirit. Hence it is by my soul alone I am what I am. *The soul, then, the soul alone, is the man.* The body is only an appendage of the real man, something distinct and extrinsic to the real "me"

or "I" or "Ego". To repeat once more Descartes' own words: "I, that is to say the mind by which I am what I am, is plainly distinct from the body". (*Ibid.*) The body, therefore, does not enter at all as a constituent factor into my being as a person, which each one gives expression to by the pronoun "I" or "Ego". Were we all, then, devoted followers of the Cartesian doctrine, the meaning of the personal pronoun "I" or "Ego" would be strictly limited and confined to each one's soul or spirit or mind alone, to the complete exclusion of the body. Even if I had no body I would still be "I", because I would still be a soul. Hence, the disembodied souls of the dead are still, according to Descartes, complete substances. They could still give expression to their consciousness and say, in their own way, "I am I". This account of what I am, is false, but why it is false, future criticism will show. Yet it may be justly said of Descartes, that he had nobly vindicated, in his own way, the existence of the soul as more certain than the existence of the body, though in doing so, he irreparably destroyed the true and obvious nature of man or "Ego" by excluding the body as an essentially constituent element of a human being. Man is not a spirit or soul alone (the Spiritualistic theory) nor a body alone (the Materialistic theory) nor is man a combination of two complete substances, body and soul extrinsically accompanying each other (the exaggerated dualism of Descartes), but man, "Ego", is composed of two incomplete substances, body and soul, intrinsically united so as to form a *single* composite substance (the Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrine).

"What am I?" is one of the most vital questions for humanity. Men and women of all ages have been asking it. They are asking it wistfully to-day.

Reviewing, at a glance, the history of modern thought, six chief answers have been given by different schools of philosophy to this fearful question:

(1) In the first place, the most degraded answer is: "I am a body, matter alone". I am one and the same stuff as the rugged mountain, the dust I tread upon, the flowers that bloom and fade. All my thoughts, my high ideals and aspirations, are at best only secretions of matter like honey distilled in the body of the bee. This is the answer of *Materialists.* They are with us to-day. They walk our streets; their materialism is at the basis of their moral, social, political and economic creeds. They are terribly in earnest to propagate their doctrine; they teach it to their children. The Socialism of Marx and Engels of Germany, now familiar throughout Europe, as well as in our own country, and the Bolshevism of Bakunin of Russia, are the nefarious growth of the materialistic answer which these new political and economic systems give to the question, "What am I?" These materialists are frankly atheistic, haters of God, immortality and all religion. Hear the words of Bakunin, the high-priest of Russian Bolshevism: "God is a corrosive poison which destroys and decomposes life, falsifies and kills it. Christianity is the impoverishment and the annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity". (*Cath. World,* Dec. 1919.) Radical Evolutionists, as displayed in the exhibitions in our Museum of Natural History in this city, teach Materialism. Descartes was not such as these.

(2) The next answer to the question, "What am I?", though not explicitly, is yet implicitly just as degrading. It is the answer of English Agnosticism and the disciples of Huxley, Herbert Spencer, etc. The Agnostic asks, "What am I?", and with an air of supercilious scepticism, answers, "We do not know".

This answer signifies, not merely temporary ignorance, which they may hope to surmount, but a know-nothingness which involves the positive and arrogant assertion, that it is beyond the power of the human mind to know "what I am". And just because the ponderous intelligence of Protestant England has been groaning now for three hundred years, and has at last brought forth the mouse of Agnosticism, by proclaiming that it cannot know what man is or what God is, a number of would-be intellectuals, who have already lost their knowledge of, and faith in, God, worship, in order to find some philosophical ground for their irresponsibility, the tiny, dark mouse of Agnosticism, and proclaim to the world that they have concluded that God and man are unknowable, because whatever is supersensible is unknowable. We, over whom the Agnostics of course assume a lofty air of superiority, must adopt, forsooth, the same degrading fashion of know-nothingism. Hence, Agnosticism would, if it could, dragoon us all into utter ignorance, not only of what God is, but of what we ourselves are. No wonder, then, that the addicts of this philosophy have opened up a wide gap in the minds of men, through which every fantastic theory of morality, politics, and economics may rush in with impunity. Agnosticism is only a polite expression of stark atheism. Woe to the world if Atheistic or Agnostic governments dominate the nations: To know God and Him Whom He has sent — Christ, that is, Catholic Christianity, is the soul of a nation, and when that soul departs from it, then is the death of that nation at hand.

Descartes, then, as we have seen, was not a materialist; neither was he an agnostic. Indeed, his philosophy helped to stem the tide of materialism that swept

over the world in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

(3) The third answer to the vital question, "What am I?" has been given by the Spiritualistic Idealists. Their answer is the extreme opposite of the Materialists. While the Materialists assert, "I am a body, matter alone", the Idealists, or pure Spiritualists, advance the theory that "I am a soul, a pure spirit alone, plus its own conscious states or subjective modifications. Since Idealists deny outright, or pretend, at least, that we cannot know matter, that is the only answer they give, and can give, to the question "What am I?" Whether Idealists, numerous as they profess to be, are sincere in giving this answer, we know not. There seemed to be only one sincere Idealist or Spiritualist in the history of modern thought, the famous Irishman, Bishop Berkeley, Protestant Bishop of Cloyne, County Cork, who lived in the eighteenth century, about whose interesting character and career we shall have something to say later on. Descartes was not a pure Spiritualist. Though he taught "the Ego was soul or spirit alone", he yet admitted the existence of our body as a companion at least inseparable from the soul in this life.

The curative practices and beliefs of the well-known devotees of Christian Science, or Eddyism, are based upon the theory of Spiritualistic Idealism. They answer "What am I?" by affirming we are all pure spirits and ideas. Diseases are only *ideas* of human spirits. Hence, if they can rid you of the idea that you are sick, by the force of natural suggestion or persuasion, they consequently rid you of the disease. Perhaps if many of the silly creatures who are deceived by Christian Science knew the foundation upon which it rests, the remnant left them of their

common sense might deter them from embracing this modern superstition.

(4) There is a fourth answer to the riddle, "What am I?" It is the solution of the Pantheists, who, as is obvious, may be either Idealistic or Materialistic. All Pantheists agree in this, that they teach, *there is only one substance in all existence, and this single substance they call God.* To Pantheism, then, "I" or "you" can have no individual, separate existence outside this divine substance. It answers the question, "What am I?", by asserting that we are all only phases or aspects of the Pantheistic divinity. "You" and "I" are but so many tiny wavelets on the great ocean of substance; we roll our little course, and sink to rise no more. Pantheism was taught in Harvard during the last generation by the late Professor Royce. Emerson was professedly Pantheistic. Many of the professors of our large universities to-day subscribe to this system. It is one of the last developments of the Reformation. Professor Haldane of England has lately published a book in defense of Pantheism.

Pantheism, under the name of Theosophy, which is of Eastern origin, has immigrated into San Francisco, and into our other large cities, and is there prevalent at present among some of the would-be intellectuals. Any system of philosophy that does not necessitate the existence of a personal God outside and independent of the world as the supreme Author and Creator of all things, will inevitably lead to Pantheism. Descartes was not a Pantheist, though, as we shall see later on, his principles, in the philosophy of Spinoza, led to that withering doctrine.

(5) The fifth curious answer to the question, "What am I?", is that given by the Phenomenal Idealists. Since Phenomenal Idealists assert that the only ob-

jects of knowledge that we can become aware of are *subjective experiences* alone, namely, subjective sensations, feelings, emotions, thoughts, mental states, of all sorts; that the substantial subject of those mental phenomena are unknowable, and that all objects outside and independent of subjective states are impervious to knowledge, they deny, therefore, the reality of all substances, both material and spiritual. The sphere of knowledge is thus strictly confined to a series of conscious phenomena. If, then, Phenomenal Idealists are asked, "What am I?", they will promptly answer: "a stream of consciousness and nothing more". Subjective states follow one another like "so many beads without a string". Man or "Ego" is a stream of sensations or feelings without anybody to feel them, a stream of thoughts without a thinker to think them. Man — "Ego", is a kind of unsubstantial, evanescent mist of ghostly conscious states apart from anybody who is conscious of them, "a phantasmagoria", as Huxley says, "on the back-ground of nothingness". Descartes was not a Phenomenal Idealist. He admitted a substantial soul or spirit.

(6) The Scholastic doctrine, which we have stated above, is simply this: The soul is the form of the body. Man, therefore, is not a dual combination of two complete and companion substances, body and soul, as Descartes taught, but man consists of the substantial union of two incomplete substances, body and soul, so as to form a *single compound substance.* We shall now resume the account of Descartes' system.

Descartes employed all his ingenuity to explain the union of soul and body, but his explanation is unsatisfactory. He taught that the soul is united to the body in the "pineal gland", where very refined particles of blood, which he called "animal spirits", act upon the soul, and the soul in turn reacts upon the

animal spirits, and the motion thus caused in the "animal spirits" moves the nerves and muscles. In this theory a union is set up not between substances, but between the *actions* of substances after the manner of two wheels of a machine.

A striking peculiarity of Descartes' psychology is that sensations and passion are experiences resident in the soul alone. Nevertheless, Descartes maintains they exist in the soul only so long as it is united to the body. He admitted, of course, the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and its endowment of free-will.

Finally, the following are the salient features of Descartes' theory of knowledge: He distinguished three classes of *ideas:* (1) innate, (2) adventitious and (3) factitious. All universal and necessary ideas, as *being, substance, cause,* axioms, God, etc., in fact, all ideas, through which we exercise our intelligent life, are innate.

At first, Descartes taught that those innate ideas were "certain realities" impressed upon our souls by God. Later on, under the stress of controversy, he was driven to admit that those ideas were only potentially innate, that is, the soul had the power of forming them by its own native activity. It is through the medium of those innate ideas we know all things intellectually, because God, Who is the author of all things, both bodies and souls, endowed "us with those ideas to which realities correspond". This undue emphasis upon purely intellectual knowledge to the neglect of knowledge derived from sense-experiences, which is, according to Descartes, in no way a determining cause in the formation of our intellectual ideas, is the reason why, in history, Descartes' theory of knowledge is called *"exaggerated intellectualism"*. The only part which, according to Descartes, sense-

experience plays in arousing in the mind intellectual ideas is the part of an *occasional* cause. Knowledge becomes perfect in judgment, by which we predicate ideas of objects. But in order that we may predicate an idea of an object, an assent of the mind is required. Assent, however, Descartes makes an act of the will, not of the intellect. Hence, judgment is not an act of intellect, but of will. All error, therefore, proceeds from the will alone. Though man's will ought to follow his intellect in order that his assents may be true, yet in God, Descartes strangely taught, that divine will decided what is true. Hence, if God should will the contrary or contradictory of what is now true, that contrary or contradictory would be true.

Adventitious ideas are those which the mind gathers from sense-experience. They reveal to us only singular facts and the relations of bodies to ourselves, while factitious ideas, or ideas which are constructed by ourselves, are combinations formed either from innate, adventitious ideas or from both by our own voluntary fancy. It cannot be too often emphasized that, in the theory of knowledge set forth by Descartes, the direct and immediate object both of intellect and sense is not reality as it is in itself apart from, and independent of, the idea of it, but rather *ideas themselves.* This theory, in the course of time, developed into Idealism.

Chapter IV.

DESCARTES

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

BOTH the destructive and constructive exposition of Descartes' system, as you may have noticed, have set forth and popularized a certain number of fundamental principles that have profoundly influenced and even revolutionized philosophy in every department from Descartes' time to the present day. This revolution was, of course, directed immediately against that philosophy which the intellectual leaders of the Catholic Church had built up during the Middle Ages. If the principles of Descartes are philosophically sound and true, then Scholasticism as a system is false. It will be interesting, then, to submit the fundamental principles of Descartes' philosophy to a critical examination of reason, and arrive at a just estimate of their validity. The philosophical world has yet to prove, no matter how they may despise it, that the *"philosophia perennis"* of Scholasticism is substantially either antiquated or false. By bringing Descartes' principles into conflict with the corresponding principles of Scholasticism, we hope to make manifest the unreasonableness of the former and the sound rationality of the latter. If we wish to deepen our knowledge of our own philosophy, no more virile and profitable intellectual exercise than this could be imagined. We shall never know the soundness of our own system until we see it struggle in successful conflict with other systems.

Two methods are available to obtain a judicial estimate of Descartes' philosophy, which the so-called intellectual world has universally heralded as the glorious dawn-light of modern thought.

In the first place, we may form a just estimate of Descartes' thought by studying the different systems that eventually developed in history as the outcome of his principles. By the fruit of his system you shall know it. This evolution of Cartesian principles into the Occasionalism of Geulincx, the Ontologism of Malebranche, the Pantheism of Spinoza and the system of Pre-Established Harmony of Leibnitz, will form the subjects of our future study. As the logical offspring of Cartesianism, the character of those fantastic systems would be sufficient, as we shall see, to justify the rejection of the parent-philosophy from which they sprang.

A more direct method of arriving at a just estimate of Descartes' system would be to submit his basic principles to direct criticism. And then, not only to show destructively, on grounds of rational evidence, that they are either inconsistent, or contradictory, and therefore illogical, but also to set forth constructively the true principle in each case that is consonant with reason. This is the method we shall at first adopt in the Criticism of Descartes' principles.

I. Now, at the very threshold of Descartes' system, the first topic that challenges our critical investigation is his initial attitude of doubt, not only towards the conclusions of all philosophers up to his time, but also towards all the knowledge which he himself had previously acquired. This doubt was real and positive. "I am constrained", he says, "at last to avow that there is nothing of all I formerly believed to be true, of which it is impossible to doubt, and that not

through thoughtlessness or levity, but from cogent and maturely considered reasons". (*Medit.* I.) Recall that he even conjured up the fantastic possibility of a "malignant demon" who had the power to deceive all his philosophical predecessors, and of which he himself may have been the victim. This positive doubt was certainly all-embracing and therefore universal.

(1) Now, in the first place, it seems obvious that when he made use of his reason to supply arguments to overthrow the trustworthiness of the same reason, he put trust in his reason to discover reliable arguments, and as the result of those arguments he abandoned that trust in his own reason. He consequently *trusted* and *did not trust* his own reason at the same time, and consequently contradicted himself.

(2) Besides, one of the arguments which he set forth for abandoning all trust in his reason was because this faculty *sometimes delivers to us false conclusions which we take for truth.* But how could he distinguish what is false from what is true except by his reason? He *trusted* his reason, then, because he admitted it could distinguish what is false from what is true, and in the same breath, *did not trust* his reason because it sometimes accepts what is false for what is true. This is the same as saying my reason is not trustworthy because it is trustworthy, which is a manifest contradiction.

(3) Furthermore, it was only through the exercise of his reason, which is the same faculty as intellectual consciousness, that he could arrive at the certainty of the fact of his own existence expressed in the famous formula: "I think, therefore, I exist". But if Descartes had already made up his mind to discredit as *positively doubtful* all the deliverances of his reason or of his intellectual consciousness, which is the same

faculty, how could he, then, consistently trust his reason, that is, his consciousness, when it revealed to him his own existence?

No doubt Descartes would say that among all other deliverances of reason, this awareness of his own existence was the one lonely exception that forced itself upon him, in the earlier stages of his investigation, as an undeniable certainty. Why did he not, then, suspend his judgment and refrain from forming the theory that the deliverances of reason were to be *universally* and *positively* doubted, until he had heard this witness of consciousness (*i.e.,* reason) bearing incontestable testimony to reason's trustworthiness? Descartes, as a judge, then, of the trustworthiness of reason, seemed to have condemned this faculty as positively untrustworthy before all the facts of the case were examined and before all the evidence was placed before the court of enquiry.

Hence, it seems that Descartes, in setting up the theory that reason is to be *universally* and *positively* doubted, contradicted himself, because he subsequently admitted that there was at least one fact, namely, his own existence, to which reason (*i.e.,* consciousness) testified, and its testimony, in that case, was not to be doubted. Hence, according to Descartes' own confession, his universal positive doubt regarding all knowledge was not universal at all.

When Descartes declared, "I think", that is, "I am doubting", what was he thinking of, or about what was he doubting? It is impossible to think or to doubt without thinking of, or doubting about something. When Descartes set forth the grounds for the establishment of the fact of his own existence, he did not explicitly state or explain the object of his thinking or doubting. Yet, we can infer from another principle of his system, namely, that the direct and imme-

diate objects of all perception, whether intellectual or otherwise, *were ideas,* that is, something subjective or psychical, not something really objective or actual in the sense that this something is outside, and independent of, the subjective idea. When Descartes, then, said, "I think, *i.e.,* I doubt", he was thinking of or doubting about an idea, the only direct and immediate object of all thought recognized by him. He did not doubt that he perceived a subjective idea, that he was certain of through consciousness. When he asserted, then, "I think, *i.e.,* I doubt", what was he doubting about? He doubted not the idea, but, whether or not that idea had any counterpart in the actual existence of material objects outside and independently of the idea. He doubted the actual existence of every being outside of the idea of it. And when he said, "therefore, I am, that is, I exist", what he again knew for certain was his *idea* of his existence. How, then, could he consistently make the transition from the idea of his existence to his actual existence, in the face of doubting the validity of the like transition from the idea that material things exist outside of him to their actual existence? If he doubtingly balked at the difficulty of "transcending" his idea of the existence of everything outside of him, he should have consistently, doubtingly balked also at "transcending" the *idea* of his own existence and kept on doubting about his actual existence. Why did he ignore the difficulty of "transcendence" in the one case, and not in the other? The difficulty, if it is a difficulty, is as valid in the one case as in the other. The idea of the actual existence of all outer objects did indeed involve the *idea* that he existed. That is all. Descartes should, then, consistently conclude not that I actually exist, but that I have an idea that I exist, that is, I exist ideally. In a word, Descartes' princi-

ples of knowledge would lead to the conclusion, "I am an idea" and nothing more. It would seem, as we shall examine later on, that Descartes' method of establishing what he professed to be his own actual existence is open to the same objections as the method he adopted in proving the existence of God. If the latter is an invalid transition from the ideal to the actual order, so is the former.

Descartes himself seems to have corroborated the correctness of the above analysis of the method he employed for the establishment of his own existence only as an idea-existence. Because he subsequently, as we shall see, made thought, that is, idea,—for an idea is thought—the essence of soul or spirit, which is the man. If man is, then, only an idea, he has no substantial actual existence, unless he makes an idea substantial. And if man is only an idea or thought, then the only legitimate philosophy is Phenomenal Idealism.

(4) Lastly, when Descartes relegated to the region of positive and real doubt all self-evident principles, as we have seen in the destructive exposition of his system, he included in that positive doubt even the objective certainty of the principle of contradiction ("it is impossible for anything to be and not to be at the same time and in the same respect"). While in positive doubt, then, regarding this principle, he was illogical in asserting as certain the truth of the fact, "I think, therefore, I exist". Because, owing to his real doubt of the principle of contradiction, it becomes also doubtful whether it is not possible to *think* and *not-think* at the same time, or whether it is not possible *to be* and *not-be* at the same time. By explicitly doubting positively the principle of contradiction he could never know anything.

II. The next step in the development of Descartes' system is the assured establishment of the fact of his

own existence, "I think, therefore, I exist", a fact which is implicit in every act of knowledge. By teaching this fact, Descartes professed to have emerged from the darkness of real doubt and to have at last grasped a reality that is absolutely true and certain. What judgment may we justly form as to the result of a critical examination of Descartes' effort to establish his own existence?

The truth and certainty of this first fact of knowledge are admitted by all sound systems of philosophy. Centuries before Descartes' pronouncement, St. Augustine (*De Civit. Dei, XI,* 26) insisted upon its certainty and St. Thomas taught it. (*"Nullus potest cogitare se non esse cum assensu; in hoc enim quid cogitat percipi se esse." De Verit. Q. X., Art.* 12.) It is not, therefore, the evident truth and certainty of our own objective existence revealed to us by consciousness that we challenge. What we do challenge is, that Descartes, irrespective of the contradictions which we have before pointed out, could not consistently and logically admit the truth and certainty of his own existence, and at the same time hold as positively doubtful other propositions quite as evident as this fundamental fact — "I think, therefore, I exist". "How do I know", he said, "that I am not also deceived each time I add together two and three, or number the sides of a square, or form some judgment still more simple, if more simple, indeed, could be imagined?" (*Med.* I.) If Descartes admits he may be deceived in forming judgments of the aforesaid truths, then he ought also to confess that he may be deceived in forming the judgment, "I think, therefore, I exist". The evidence for the truth and certainty of the above-mentioned judgments is just as cogent and compelling as the evidence for the judgment, "I think, therefore, I exist".

But a good Cartesian would, no doubt, protest against this line of argument, and say that "even if I should make an effort to cast out the judgment 'I think (I doubt), therefore, I exist', by the door of doubt, it would still persist in returning again by the door of truth and certainty". But this feature of persisting to be true and certain is also characteristic of "the principle of contradiction", as well as many other axiomatic principles, and yet Descartes really doubted them before he professed to have established his own existence. Therefore, logically he ought to have doubted his own existence.

But a loyal Cartesian may still advance to the defense of his master, and say,—"what Descartes really doubted in the case of the principle of contradiction, as well as regards other so-called self-evident principles, was not that those principles *seemed* to be subjectively certain, but rather whether they had an application to objective reality, just as he did not doubt that he 'seemed' to see and feel material objects, although he doubted whether material objects had any objective 'reality'. Well, then, for the same reason, he ought to have admitted only that *'he seemed to exist'*, but doubt whether he existed as an objective reality". The reason why he claimed he was not certain, in the case of sense-knowledge, that objects really existed outside and independent of the subjective act of perception, expressed by the phrase, "I seem to see objects", though he was quite certain of the mere *"seeming to see"*, was, that he could not clearly explain how the mind could transcend itself and grasp an object outside of itself. But that same reason holds good in the case of knowing with certainty his own existence. Because "I think" is likewise a subjective act or happening, and yet Descartes seems to have no difficulty in admitting

that it transcends itself. In and through this subjective act of thinking, he grasps the reality of his own existence. If, then, Descartes was justified in saying, "I seem to see objects", but doubts whether he sees real objects, he ought, in like manner, say — "I seem to exist, but I am not certain that I do". The difficulty of transcendence, if it is a difficulty, holds good in both cases.

III. Descartes made consciousness, to the exclusion of all other cognitive faculties, the starting-point of all truth and certainty. Now, since consciousness, by its very nature, is a faculty which can only perceive the acts or states which affect us subjectively, as our own, and cannot *directly* of itself perceive any objects outside and independent of us, he concluded that the objects which we *directly* and *immediately* perceive are our subjective ideas, meaning, as Descartes does by "ideas", subjective sensations, subjective supersensible concepts, states of consciousness. Consciousness could *directly* perceive no other objects. This theory afterwards, in the development of philosophy, opened the way to Idealism. Descartes, himself, when he had fully developed his system, was not an idealist. He professed Realism. He based his conviction that material things existed outside and independently of himself, upon the existence of an all-truthful God, Who could not be deceived or deceive us. He was a "reasoned realist". We shall afterwards examine whether Descartes was logically justified in professing Realism.

Idealism of one kind or other, and it has taken a multiplicity of forms, has been, outside of Scholasticism, which has always remained a philosophy of Realism, the fashionable philosophy with modern thinkers since Descartes' time, and continues in vogue at the

present day. This prevalence of Idealism in modern thought has been emphasized in the following brief statement by Professor Case of Oxford, who is not a scholastic writer. Professor Case writes: "Psychological idealism began with the supposition of Descartes that all the immediate objects of knowledge are ideas. From Descartes, it passed to Locke and Berkeley. But with Hume it changed its terms from ideas to impressions. Kant preferred phenomena; Mill, sensations. The most usual terms of the present day are sensations, feelings, psychical phenomena, and states of consciousness. But the hypothesis has not changed its essence, though the idealists have changed their terms. *Verbum, non animum mutant.* They at least agree that all sensible data are psychical objects of some kind or other". (*Physical Realism,* p. 15.)

This "seeming" or phenomenal, not the real, Ego, is all that Kant and Hume professed to know.

That we may understand, then, why it is that the philosophy of Idealism dominates our great non-Catholic universities at the present day, and approves itself to the minds of our modern non-Catholic leaders of thought, it will be useful and interesting to trace this prevalence of Idealism to the epistemological principles set forth by Descartes. Those Cartesian principles are:

That consciousness is the starting point of all knowledge. This is the root principle, and from it are easily inferred the two other principles of Idealism, to wit:

(1) That consequently the immediate and direct objects of knowledge are, therefore, not objects *outside* and *independent* of ourselves as is vulgarly thought, but modifications or changes *within* ourselves, — that is, within our souls, since Descartes in-

terpreted "ourselves" as souls or spirits alone. Those internal or subjective changes the Idealists designate by several different names — ideas, impressions, phenomena, sensations, feelings, psychical facts, states of consciousness. The objects which we know directly and immediately, then, and which supply us with the foundation of our knowledge, are of such stuff as ideas are made of. Indeed, if consciousness is the faculty which supplies our first objects of knowledge, those objects could be no other than those above mentioned. Because it is the very nature of consciousness to perceive directly only those experiences which affect us internally, as our own. *Consciousness, as such, cannot grasp an object outside of ourselves.*

Besides, have you ever seriously reflected upon the nature of knowledge? Have you ever realized that knowledge is something unique, something that stands alone, and that cannot be classified under any other category in our experience? Permit me, then, to explain the inherent difficulties of interpreting knowledge as the ordinary person interprets it, when he is persuaded that his knowledge grasps external objects, difficulties which have led so many intellectuals to go over to the camp of the Idealists.

In the first place, an act of perception, whether of sense or intellect, is an act of the mind, and it is undeniable that this act, by which, for instance, I grasp the knowledge of yonder City Hall, remains within my mind. It is what is called an *immanent act.* I know whatever I know by acts of the senses, of simple apprehension, judgment and reasoning. All those mental processes are *acts* of the soul, and therefore remain within the soul as so many psychical accidents, distinct, indeed, from the soul, but still inhering in the soul.

The great problem, then, of knowledge is, how can

an act of the soul, or of a faculty of the soul, grasp an external object which is outside the soul, and is where the soul is not? How can the soul travel, as it were, outside of itself and lay hold of objects by an act that remains within itself? The object that we grasp in knowledge is certainly not physically within the soul. How, then, does it lay hold of it and know it? This difficulty in reference to knowledge is called the difficulty of *transcendence*. And overcome by this difficulty, which they say is insurmountable, the Idealists formulate their third principle, which is a logical consequence of making consciousness the starting-point of knowledge, and assert that,

(2) The mind or soul cannot transcend itself, and, therefore, cannot know anything except what is intimately present within itself. And objects *as they exist outside of the soul* are not certainly, in their own reality, present within it. But you may say that ideas are images or representations within the mind of objects outside the mind, and when we know the representations, ideas, or images, by consciousness, then we know objects outside represented by our ideas, just as we see our face in a mirror. Reflect, that if this is the way we know objects outside of us, it follows that we never perceive the objects as they exist in themselves. We only perceive their representations, ideas, or images. And since we cannot know objects directly and immediately in themselves, how could we ever know that our subjective representations, ideas, or images of objects really resemble the objects themselves? The only way we could become certain that our mental representations, or ideas, truly resemble objects outside of us, would be to compare the representation with the objects themselves. But that we could never do, because we know only the subjective representations, but not the objects

themselves. Hence, if we make consciousness the starting-point of knowledge, we shall be, like maniacs, ever doomed to stare upon our own subjective ideas. It would be utterly impossible to get outside of ourselves or know anything outside of ourselves. We would be driven to the universally-condemned position of *solipsism.*

What answer does Scholasticism give to those principles of Idealism?

(1) Descartes asserted that *intellectual consciousness* is the starting-point of all knowledge. Consciousness in his system must mean *intellectual* consciousness. Because, for him, *the spirit or soul is the man,* and the consciousness that is rooted in spirit can only be intellectual. Hence, he would maintain that our intellectual or rational life is developed before our sensitive life, — a doctrine that is opposed to all experience. Hence, it is the teaching of Scholasticism that sense knowledge precedes intellectual knowledge. *"Nihil est in intellectu nisi prius fuerit aliquo modo in sensu",* is received as axiomatic by scholasticism. We first look *outward,* then *inward,* and lastly *upward,* whereas, according to the topsy-turvyism of Descartes, we first look *inward* (consciousness), then *upward* (to God), and lastly *outward* (to material things).

(2) Scholasticism denies outright that the direct and immediate objects of our cognitive faculties, whether of sense or intellect, are psychical or subjective modifications of ourselves, and teaches, on the contrary, that the direct and immediate objects of knowledge are objects that are outside and independent of the act of perception or thought *by means of which* they are perceived. The object of perception or thought is not the perception itself or the thought itself considered as a mere modification of ourselves as a subject.

Ueberweg, who did not profess be a scholastic in philosophy, subscribed to this teaching — He says: "But the complexes of sensation (*i.e.,* the psychical changes within us that accompany the perception of outward objects), though alone *immediately* in our consciousness, are not therefore necessarily the immediate *object* of sense perception, to wit, if they be at all not the object but the *means* of it; our attention, in the case of complexes of sensation, is *directed entirely* to the external things manifested to us through them; the external thing is that which I see, handle, perceive.

"The complexes of sensation are, as such, late in becoming the object of psychological reflection". (*Annot. to Berkeley,* p. 347.)

In the language of Scholasticism, the subjective factor of sense or intellect is *not that which* is directly and immediately known, but the subjective factor, though in itself not *directly* known, still becomes the *means by which* the external reality is *directly known.* An orange, for example, is not a collection of psychical or subjective feelings or sensations. This is the primitive and untutored instincts which a child manifests: He stretches out his little hands for the orange. Why should he stretch his hand outward for the orange, if his primitive knowledge told him it was a collection of subjective sensations *within* him? It is no answer to say, with the Idealists, that the orange is only an outward projection of our inner sensations. The human race possesses an irresistible conviction that the orange is really existing outside of us. The burden of proof to show that this conviction is an illusion rests, therefore, with the Idealists. And no Idealist has ever succeeded in proving this conviction delusory.

(3) What of the difficulty of "transcendence", the stumbling block of Idealists? How, they say, can an act of knowledge, which undoubtedly remains within the mind, go outside the mind to reach an external object? An act of a sense faculty or of the intellect cannot, they say, transcend itself, so as to grasp an object outside itself.

Scholasticism answers thus: It is certain that what we know is, in some way, in our minds. Our friend, for instance, about whom we are thinking, is in our mind and present to it in some way. But it is equally certain that our friend, as he objectively exists, is not in our minds, any more than the real mountain we know is in our mind. The object we know is in our mind in this way: There is, in our mind, a mental reproduction or representation of the real object. It is not this representation or mental reproduction of the real object that is, however, perceived, directly and immediately, but is the *means by which* the real object is directly and immediately perceived. This mental representation of the object in the mind is called "intentional", for by means of it the mind *tends* toward the object and grasps it as the term of our knowledge. The mind does, indeed, transcend itself in its acts of knowledge, not, however, physically, but *cognitively.*

IV. Descartes set up as a criterion, test or measure of truth, "clearness and distinctness of ideas". But he also felt that he could not put absolute trust in this criterion, until he had proved that it came from God, who could not deceive us. Descartes' complete criterion or standard of truth was, therefore, not "clear and distinct ideas" alone, but "clearness and distinctness of ideas" backed by the existence of an all-truthful God. "Without a knowledge of these

two truths", he says, (1) "that God exists and (2) cannot deceive, I don't see how I can be certain of anything". (*Med.* III.) We shall be obliged to quarrel critically with this criterion.

In the first place, to make "clearness and distinctness of ideas", that is, to locate the mark of logical truth as resident within subjective ideas, and make of this mark a premise from which we may argue from ideas thus characterized by clearness and distinctness to objects beyond and independent of them, would be destructive of what all sane thinkers throughout the ages understand by logical truth or the truth of knowledge.

The classical definition of "logical truth" or the truth of thought given by St. Thomas is, "the conformity of thought with reality" (*conformitas intellectus cum re*), wherein reality is the measure of thought and not thought the measure of reality. Hence, truth necessarily presupposes a subject knowing and an object known. The mark or criterion of truth must, therefore, be sought for, either in the subject knowing or in the object known. But should we seek for and profess to find it in the subject knowing or in ideas or thought, which are modifications of the knowing subject, the inevitable consequence would be, that thought or ideas would then become the measure of reality, not reality the measure of thought or ideas. In other words, our thoughts would then be true because we clearly and distinctly *think* them true. But it is obvious that it does not follow that, just because we *think* that our thoughts or ideas are true, that they, therefore, measure up to the reality. We may have quite clear and distinct ideas to which no reality corresponds. For ages men had a clear and distinct idea that the sun moved around the earth. Yet every school boy knows now, that to that

clear and distinct idea no reality corresponded. That idea or thought, though clearer and more distinct than the thought or idea that the earth actually moves around the sun, was false. We have met people who had very clear and distinct ideas of fairies and ghosts, when the objects of those ideas were mere illusions of their phantasy. Men may justify the most extravagant wickedness in morals and the most repulsive errors in religion by saying that they have a clear and distinct idea of the rightness of their actions, or of their religious convictions. To make clear and distinct ideas the measure of truth would be to adopt a relative standard of truth and certainty.

Does it not stand to reason, then, that we are to look for the standard, the criterion, the mark of truth, in the objective reality that is known, not in our thoughts or ideas? Because it is the objective reality known, which is the *measure* and the stamp of our thoughts or ideas, in order that they may conform to reality. We do not look for the measure or mark that is impressed on wax in the wax itself, but in the stamp or signet-ring that imparts its impression to the wax. It is in the *object or reality* known, then, and not in the subject knowing, that the ultimate criterion of logical truth or the truth of human knowledge is found. That criterion is called *objective evidence.*

Now, since objective evidence is the genuine criterion of truth, and not clearness and distinctness of ideas, we conclude that the fundamental truth of Descartes' philosophy, to wit, his famous "I think, therefore, I exist", though undoubtedly true and certain in every sound system of philosophy, — a truth which St. Augustine has established centuries before Descartes, — yet, this principle is not true precisely, because, as Descartes maintained, it conveyed to his mind a clear and distinct idea or thought, but because

it was *objectively evident.* And because this fundamental fact, "I think, therefore, I exist", is objectively evident, it is true, and does convey to our minds a clear and distinct idea. *Hence, on the understanding that "clearness and distinctness of ideas" is the effect of objective evidence, then "clearness and distinctness" would be a criterion of truth, but not the ultimate criterion.*

From the standpoint of this false subjective criterion of Descartes, whose spirit has, since its author's day, capitivated non-Catholic intellectuals, we can judge at their true value many opinions that are prevalent in our own time. Descartes' criterion of truth tends to give philosophical respectability to the principle of *private judgment.* That principle formulates itself thus—I think clearly and distinctly that my opinion on this or that question is true, therefore, it is true just because *I think so.* I bring myself *to think,* for instance, that divorce is true; to think this or that interpretation of the Bible is true; to think that the state and not parents has the first right to educate children; to think that birth control is true; to think that individuals have no right to private property; to think that state policy as independent of God and of the moral law, etc., is true. Therefore, they are true just because I think them true. No, the true principle is, not that something is true just because I think it true, but rather I think it true because it is in itself really true. And the ultimate reason why a judgment or reasoning is in reality true, is, because it is objectively evident. In other words, if you allow me to coin terms, logical truth is not *ideo-centric,* but *onto-centric.* Any man who makes thought or ideas the measure of the test of truth, plays the ostrich. He sticks his head in the sand of his own subjectivity or private judgment, and because he does not conceive

and perceive things as they are, says they do not exist. Private judgment leads to Idealism and ultimately to universal scepticism. It leads to dissensions, bigotry and persecution in society. For bitter conflicts will always arise in society to determine which set of private judgments is to prevail.

In the second place, Descartes himself, as we have already indicated, did not place absolute trust in clearness and distinctness of ideas, to offset the fantastic possibility of a "malignant demon who may use all his artifices to deceive him". He was compelled to establish the existence and veracity of God. Hence, he confesses that "without a knowledge of these two truths, that God exists and cannot deceive, I don't see how I can be certain of anything". But how could he arrive at the knowledge of these two truths? Only by demonstration or proof. But demonstration, to be valid, must be based on premises that are already acknowledged to be true and certain. Now, true and certain premises were not available for Descartes, because the only test or criterion of their truth and certainty was their clearness and distinctness. But this criterion Descartes distrusted. "Because", he said, "until I know that God exists, I don't see how I can ever be certain of anything". The premises, therefore, which he could alone make use of to prove God's existence, were doubtful, and from doubtful premises only doubtful conclusions can be drawn. Hence, the conclusion, "God exists and cannot deceive me", derived as it was from doubtful premises, was itself doubtful. Consequently, since his method of proving God's existence failed, Descartes, by his own confession, could never know anything for certain. The outcome of Descartes' false criterion of truth is, consequently, universal scepticism.

In closing our examination of Descartes' Episte-

mology, it may be well to summarize the main principles of his theory of knowledge, and contrast them with the principles that appeal to sound reason.

DESCARTES	SOUND REASON
Initial attitude of—	Initial attitude of—
1. To doubt seriously and positively of all that he "formerly believed to be true."	1. To accept as true and certain whatever your intellect vouches to be immediately evident.
2. To make consciousness the starting point of all knowledge.	2. To make the senses the starting point of all knowledge.
3. Hence, the direct, immediate and first objects of knowledge are ideas.	3. The direct, immediate and first objects of knowledge are material objects revealed by the senses.
4. Unless I know that a good and veracious God exists, I cannot know anything for certain.	4. I can know many things for certain, antecedently to my knowledge of God's existence. If I cannot know anything for certain before I know God, then I cannot know God for certain.
5. The criterion of truth and certainty is clearness and distinctness of ideas plus the knowledge of a good and veracious God.	5. The criterion of truth and certainty is objective evidence.
6. The certain existence of any reality, outside and independent of the Ego, cannot be known except by a process of reasoning or demonstration.	6. The certain existence of many objective realities, outside and independent of the Ego or self, can be immediately known by judgment based upon the report of the external senses and many objective truths, by the immediate avouchments of our intellects, determined by objective evidence.

Chapter V.

DESCARTES

CRITICISM (*Contd.*)

We have yet to examine critically the fundamental doctrines of Descartes'

(1) Psychology,
(2) Natural Theology,
(3) and Cosmology.

(1) Having established to his satisfaction his own existence, Descartes asked the significant question, "What am I?" and answered, "I am a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking,—so that I, that is to say, the mind, by which I am what I am, is plainly distinct from the body". (*Method,* p. IV.) Descartes, then, teaches that "I" am mind or spirit only; that the essence of mind is *thought* or thinking; that the body, whose existence at this stage of his system was not yet established, was not an essential part of the "I" or the man; that the body, therefore, was not substantially united to the soul, but merely a companion or extrinsic appendage to the soul, and thus a separate and complete substance distinct from the "I". By thus cleaving the "I", that is, man, into two complete and independent substances, and thus destroying man's substantial unity, Descartes inaugurated what is known in the history of philosophy as *"The exaggerated dualism of Descartes",* a doctrine which, as a sad heritage, he left to future philosophers to develop; nor did they

fail to derive from it, some Occasionalism, some Ontologism, some Materialism, some Spiritualism, some Pantheism.

Now, we shall endeavor to show that when Descartes professed to conclude from the testimony of his consciousness that man is a spirit or soul only, he did not interpret or read aright the *complete* data of that testimony. What Descartes seemed to have done was, to draw an arbitrary circle around some of the data of consciousness, namely, his intellectual or supersensible operations, and say, "thus far shall the testimony of consciousness go, and no farther". Of course, if Descartes could establish that the only data which consciousness directly and immediately reveals are our own intellectual operations and their objects, then he would be logical in concluding, at least according to the principles of Scholasticism, that man was spirit or soul alone. It is only spirit or soul alone that could be the subject of intellectual operations.

But consciousness obviously reveals to us with equal certainty many other operations and experiences besides intellectual operations. Consciousness testifies to each of us also, that we are the subject of sensuous perceptions, of aches and pains, of hunger, thirst, discomforts and comforts of body, and some of those at least, a headache or lumbago, for example, reveal that "I", as subject of those feelings, am *spatially extended.* Many of the data of consciousness, therefore, carry with them a feeling of *bodily extension,* and, consequently, that "I", as the subject of those data, am a *conscious, living, corporeal substance.* It would seem to be just as reasonable to judge that "I am a mere animal", because consciousness reveals to me that I am the subject of various bodily and extended sensations, and feelings, as to judge that "I am a spirit merely, because consciousness reveals to me that I am

the subject of intellectual operations. Both of those false judgments would be based on a partial interpretation of the complete data of consciousness.

Descartes, of course, at the stage of his system wherein he established his own existence, would deny, owing to his positive doubt, that he was certain of the existence of any material being, and, consequently, that our consciousness of our own extended, sensuous operations was a valid basis for judging that we were corporeal substances. For the existence of our own bodies was embraced in the universal doubt of Descartes regarding the existence of all material beings. Hence, Descartes could say, as he did say, at this point in the development of his system, "I could suppose (*i.e.*, doubt) that I had no body and that there was no world or any place that I might be". We answer that the the testimony of consciousness is just as peremptory in revealing to us our sensuous, extended experience as our own, as is its testimony in revealing to us our own intellectual operations are our own. And if Descartes doubted consciousness, testifying to the existence of our own body as the subject of our sensuous and extended feelings, so he ought likewise to doubt of his substantial spirit, as Hume afterwards did, as the subject of his "thought" or "thinking".

Furthermore, if the clear consciousness of our sensuous and extended feelings does not reveal to us our own bodies as the subject of those feelings, then, even should Descartes successfully demonstrate, as he afterwards professed to do, the existence of matter or bodies, he could never know that our bodies were *our own* as distinct from other external bodies. In Descartes' system, our own bodies would be as alien and external to ourselves as the stones beneath our feet, and his doctrine that "man was spirit alone"

would anticipate, so far as man is concerned, the spiritualism of Leibnitz and Berkeley.

Descartes not only endeavored to establish his position that "man was spirit or soul alone", by eliminating from the testimony of consciousness our various sensuous and *extended* feelings, but he also attempted to demonstrate the same doctrine of the purely spiritual nature of man from two premises. The first premise was his fundamental and first principle, "I think, therefore, I exist". The second premise which he used to reinforce the first, was a *doubtful supposition,* namely, "I could *suppose* (*i. e.,* doubt) I had no body and that there was no world nor place in which I might be". The introduction of this principle, which was inspired by his positive doubt of the existence of all corporeal things, and hence of his own body, would leave man denuded of his body, and hence establish him as a spirit alone, if Descartes could prove to a certainty that body does not enter into the composition of man as an essential, substantial element. But Descartes does not say, "I can prove that I have no body". What he said was, "I could suppose (*i. e.,* doubt) I had no body".

Now any tyro in logic knows that a conclusion, namely, "I am a spirit alone", derived from one certain premise, "I think, therefore, I exist", and from another premise which confessedly is a *doubtful supposition,* "I could *suppose* I had no body", will partake of the nature of the *weaker* premise, and, therefore, the conclusion that "I am soul or spirit alone" is also a *dubious supposition,* and, therefore, devoid of all truth and certainty.

Descartes' conclusion should have been, "I may or may not be a spirit", or, whether I am a spirit or not are dubious alternatives. In categorically concluding from the premises employed, that he was a spirit

only, he certainly outstepped the logical implications of his premises. (Cf. Coffey, *Epistemology,* V. II., p. 9.)

It is strange perversion, too, of Logic, to find Descartes now making use of his reason and trusting it, though he had never established the trustworthiness of that reason which, antecedently to his examination of his knowledge, he wholly and *really* distrusted. What value can all his conclusions now have, since they are arrived at by means of his already discredited faculty of reason?

But Descartes would undoubtedly contend that he did not distrust reason as such, and he certainly did not distrust his own individual reason. In fact, he had an overweening confidence in his own reason. What he did distrust, he would say, was all the deliverances of all other men's reason throughout the ages up to the day that Descartes' reason began to function. But it is reasonable to conclude that if the faculty of reason in all men throughout the ages never arrived at a true and certain conclusion in philosophical matters, then human reason must be, in its nature, intrinsically vitiated. We would naturally conclude, for instance, that a pen with which we could never write, or an auto that could never move, were intrinsically vitiated. Because we judge of the intrinsic nature of things by their actions. If human reason never functioned aright throughout so many ages until Descartes' reason appeared as the extraordinary exception, then we would be led to conclude that Descartes was not human, but a God-like superman, a claim that would be rather arrogant to make.

To return to the question, "What am I?", we have shown that Descartes' conclusion that "I" meant soul or spirit only is invalid.

The true answer to the question, "What am I?", is not the spiritualistic answer of Descartes, which interprets the "I" as soul or spirit only, nor the materialistic answer that "I" am body only, nor that "I" am a combination of the two separate, independent substances existing merely in companionship, but that "I" am one single substance made up of two incomplete substances, body and soul substantially united.

Now, that we may understand the peculiar psychology of Descartes, that is, his account of the nature of the soul, and the origin of all our ideas, we must divide the whole matter into the separate problems which he professed to answer. We can never understand the theories of knowledge that are influencing men's minds to-day, unless we understand Descartes — the Father of Modern Psychology.

What, then, is the essence or nature of the soul, and what is the essence or nature of matter or body, according to Descartes, and what are the consequences that logically flow from his teaching? Descartes made *actual* thought the essence of the soul. This theory, of course, involves the consequence that the soul cannot, for even a moment, cease from exercising *actual* thought. A cessation of actual thought would imply the cessation of the soul's existence.

Now, can it be successfully defended on psychological grounds that the soul must always actually think? As long as the soul exists in our present state united to the body, all intellectual thought or thinking depends extrinsically upon the activity of the imagination or phantasy. The phantasy, because sensuous, is an organic faculty. It is obvious, then, that the organ of the phantasy may be impaired or paralyzed, and its activity may be thereby interrupted. But any interruption of the activity of the phantasy would also bring about cessation of actual, intellectual thought.

of the soul, and yet the soul may continue in existence.

Even were it established that the soul is *de facto* always actively thinking, it would not follow that active thought is the essence of the human soul. To establish this latter theory, the Cartesians maintain that the essence of the human soul is constituted by the fact that it is always actually conscious of itself. When the Cartesians assert, therefore, that *actual thought,* which they identify with actual consciousness, is the essence of the soul, they mean by "actual thought" or "actual consciousness", not the "thought" or "consciousness" that has for its *immediate* and *primary* object the actually present operations of intellect and will, which are so many phenomenal accidents issuing from the activity of the soul, and through which or by means of which, because those phenomenal accidents are bound up concretely with the substance of the soul, we come to know the soul itself as something that merely *exists.* In other words, the Cartesians contend that they do not attain to the knowledge of the soul's existence through means of the soul's phenomenal activities, which mediate or intervene between "thought" or "consciousness" and the soul itself. What the Cartesians mean by "thought" or "consciousness" is the "thought" that has for its immediate and primary object the *nude soul itself,* and by "consciousness," that *substantial* consciousness by which the soul directly and immediately attains the knowledge not only to the mere existence of soul itself *independently of its operations,* but the immediate and direct knowledge of the *essence or nature* of the nude, substantial soul.

Descartes himself, when he formulated his famous first principle, "I think, therefore, I exist", never pointed out what object he was thinking of. But his successors, the Cartesians, analyzing his doctrine that

"thought", that is, "consciousness", was the essence of the soul, came to the conclusion that the *direct* object of "thought" in which he placed the essence of the soul must be the very nature or essence of the soul itself and not its operations, which are accidental to the soul. Because they very logically reasoned that if the soul cannot directly exercise its activity of thinking except upon objects that are not the pure soul, but, as in the case of consciousness, upon objects that are accidental to the soul, to wit, its operations, then it follows that thought or consciousness cannot be the essence of the soul. That "thought" may be the essence of soul, then, the nude soul must perpetually exercise its thought. And since thought must have an object, that object must be the *pure soul itself*. Now, it cannot be reasonably maintained that through "thought", or consciousness", we can *immediately and directly* come to know the bare, nude essence of the human soul. And if it is false to say that we can attain immediately and directly, without the intervention of the phenomenal operations of the soul, a knowledge of the pure, nude soul and its nature, as a thinking thing, then it follows that "thought" or consciousness" is not the essence of the human soul.

We shall set forth some of the main arguments to prove that the soul is incapable of knowing its own pure, bare self directly and immediately, independently of our knowledge of every intervening soul-action.

In the first place, if we could know our soul immediately and directly through its own essence, then it would follow that we should be able to form positive and proper concepts of purely spiritual beings. But experience tells us that we cannot form positive and proper concepts of the essence of any spiritual being. We become aware of the essences of spiritual beings

through a process of reasoning, that is, *mediately,* and the concepts which we form of what is characteristic of them, and which differentiates them from material beings, are all *negative* and *analogical* concepts.

In the second place, the doctrine of the Cartesians, explained above, would lead logically to the conclusion that the union of the soul and body would be unnecessary because purposeless. Because, then, the soul could essentially and independently of its union with the body know an object, that is, the spiritual soul, which is pre-eminently nobler than all the material objects which we are capable of knowing through the agency of the senses. And if we could know our soul in this manner, then we could also know God and many other supersensible objects independently of all ministrations of the senses, and, therefore, independently of the soul's union with body. The union of soul and body would, therefore, be useless. Yet, such a union exists, and since we must assume that it was brought about with wisdom, its purpose can only be to contribute to the perfection of the higher faculties in man.

On the other hand, Descartes taught that the essence of matter or body consists wholly in "extension", that is, in length, breadth, and depth. Consequently, matter or body, according to Descartes, is essentially *inert, inactive,* dormant, incapable of doing anything or being the efficient cause of anything. The only activity it possesses comes to it from the outside, namely, from a certain amount of local motion imparted to dead matter in the beginning by God, and this amount of motion in the whole universe of matter never changes. Motion, then, is not inherent in matter, but is only an extrinsic push given to matter, just like the motion of a machine. Descartes then looked

upon vegetables and animals, and even the human body, as matter, pure and simple, without any inherent principle of life. He classified the vegetable and animal kingdoms as belonging to the same kind of matter as the mineral world. Hence he explained all the changes that take place in the mineral, vegetable, animal world, and in the human body, by motion extrinsically imparted by God to the matter that compose them. Hence, you can understand why he called all of them machines or "automatons", like our watches or children's toys. Even vegetables, animals, and the body of man are not really living; they are as dormant and dead as minerals are. The circulation of the blood, digestion, breathing, the cries of the animals, their movements, the singing of the birds, all our own bodily activities which we ascribe to the principle of life are, to Descartes, all the effect of mechanical motion. Outside of souls or spirits, all other beings, which we imagine live, are so many phonographs, whose apparent activities are the result of mechanical motion of the universe. Such a philosophy is known as *"the philosophy of mechanism"*. In opposition to the doctrine of Descartes, which declares that matter is intrinsically and essentially *inert,* because *extension,* which he falsely assumed to be the essence of matter, is by its nature inert, sound philosophy and science proclaim that matter is *intrinsically active.* In other words, we assert the proposition that —

> *The corporeal substances of this world are true efficient causes and not merely occasional causes as the Cartesians maintain.*

In answer to the question whether corporeal substances are endowed with intrinsic activity or are, in other words, true efficient causes, three theories have been prevalent in the history of philosophy:

(*a*) The Stoics taught that all activity of bodies was not to be ascribed to matter itself, but to an invisible agency which pervades the visible world, and which they called the *"soul of the world"*. Akin to this theory is that of the Arabian philosophers who taught that all the changes in this visible world were brought about through the agency of inferior intelligent and celestial beings. Newman, in his youth, fancied that the angels were the efficient causes of all corporeal changes.

(*b*) The Cartesian theory has already been explained.

(*c*) The prevailing teaching of Scholasticism, which declares that corporeal substances are endowed with real activity, and are, therefore, the proximate efficient causes of all the changes which we observe in this world. We do not enter here the question of miracles.

Proofs: (1) The Cartesians admit, of course, with the exception of Spinoza, the existence of the Creator as an infinitely intelligent Being.

Now we observe that all living beings are furnished with organs of different kinds and of admirably different and delicate structure. If these organs were not so many instruments destined to be exercised by living beings in the performance of different activities, then they would be *useless and created* for no purpose. But it would be derogatory to infinite intelligence to create anything useless and purposeless. Therefore, animals and living beings are not mere "automatons".

(2) Regarding the activity of inorganic matter, all scientists are unanimously agreed that matter is endowed with inherent activity. The force of gravitation, as set forth by Newton, would discredit the theory of the inactivity of matter.

We can now readily understand the false, though logical, consequence of those Cartesian doctrines in the sphere of psychology. Some of those false consequences will be apparent in the answer which Descartes gave to the problems—

(1) of the union of the soul and body,
(2) and of the origin of all our knowledge.

Descartes, arguing logically, let us admit, from false principles, opened wide a chasm between the soul and body of man, over which he vainly endeavored to build a bridge of union. He saparated outright the soul and body of man and left that separation yawning to-day. He attempted an explanation to bring them into unity. He failed and left to future thinkers the famous problem of the *"exaggerated dualism of Descartes"*, a doctrine which consists both in the utter separation of soul and body, and the impossibility of any interaction between them. This "exaggerated dualism" was the logical consequence of the following Cartesian principles—

(1) that "I" was the soul, as something entirely distinct from the body.
(2) that the essence of the soul was *thought*, and the essence of the body was extension, and since a thinking thing and an extended thing are two heterogeneous substances, they could never be united together to form one substance, nor could one react on the other. An extended thing that is wholly inert could not act upon a purely thinking substance.

How, then, did Descartes explain the rise of knowledge, that is, both intellectual and sensuous knowledge? Whence came his ideas of intellect and his sensations? To understand Descartes' explanation of knowledge, we must divest ourselves, for the time be-

ing, of the explanation of knowledge which Aristotle and the Schoolmen had made familiar in Psychology. The Aristotelian and Scholastic explanation maintains that all our knowledge, even intellectual ideas, begin in sense-knowledge. Hence the principle, *"Nihil est in intellectu nisi pruis fuerit aliquo modo in sensu"*, has been received as axiomatic by the Schoolmen. Descartes repudiated that principle. That principle supposes that bodies or matter, including our own body, can act upon our senses and make an impression upon them. The Scholastics maintain besides that our senses are faculties that do not emerge from the pure soul or spirit only, but have for their subject a material organ animated by the soul. Sense faculties, then, are not rooted in the body alone, or in the soul alone, but in a single principle made up of body and soul.

Now, Descartes, on the contrary, taught that both the intellect as a faculty and the senses as faculties emerged from the soul alone and are faculties of the soul alone. They are both spiritual faculties, or, rather, he did not distinguish the cognitive faculties, whether of a sense or intellect, from the pure soul. Every activity, then, which we call cognitive, ~~are~~ functions of the soul alone — sense perception, imagination, pure intellection, as well as our non-cognitive functions — will-action, feelings, emotions, and passions. In the production of all those functions the body did not enter as a factor at all. It was a dead, inert substance that could not act upon soul. Recall that even animals had no sense-knowledge, because they were not, like man, souls or spirits.

As a consequence of those principles, Descartes was obliged to teach that all intellectual ideas, and all sensations or sense-knowledge, had their birth within the soul alone, and were completed and perfected

within the soul, independently of any determination or action upon the soul by matter. Briefly, the soul was mother of all cognition or knowledge without a father, that is, knowledge sprang up in the soul, somehow, without the latter receiving any impression from matter, as a determining cause of knowledge.

Hence, Descartes, to account for knowledge, invented *innate* ideas. All our purely intellectual knowledge is inborn in the soul alone. Truly, he also added what he called *adventitious* ideas, which came from the outside or from matter. But those adventitious ideas did not come from matter, in the sense that matter acted in any way as an efficient determining cause upon the soul, but only as an *occasion.* Descartes' explanation of the origin of those adventitious ideas is one of the most obscure and weakest parts of his psychology. He endeavored to explain their rise in the soul thus: He attributed to the body of man what he called "animal spirits". Those animal spirits were subject to motion. They were not animate, because the body wherein they moved was not animated. Yet other bodies could act upon those animal spirits, and move them, because both the mover and the moved were in both cases matter. When those "animal spirits" were then moved in the body in a certain way, God took *occasion* of their movements to arouse within the soul certain corresponding ideas. Those ideas were *adventitious,* then, in contrast to his already existing innate ideas, but they were not adventitious, inasmuch as they came from an outside material *cause,* but only from an outside material *occasion.*

He also admitted factitious ideas. Those are easily explained, because they are only the combination of either innate or adventitious ideas or of both.

You can now easily understand that, on Descartes' principles, material objects had nothing to do with

the making or the origin of our ideas of them in the mind, except as *occasional,* not as efficient causes. You can also appreciate why it was that the only direct and immediate objects of Descartes' knowledge were the ideas locked within his own soul. The cognitive activity of his soul expressed in thought was completely cut off from external objects. Looking at his ideas, he saw that they represented objects, as everybody's ideas do, but he could not know whether those objects which they represented really existed as they appeared. For aught he could tell, as Huxley says, they may be "an orderly phantasmagoria", mere ghosts of objects "in the background of nothingness". He could contemplate his ideas and thoughts imprisoned in his own soul, but he could not attain to the reality of existing objects outside himself. How, then, did he come to know material objects outside and independent of himself? He ultimately professed to know them, but how?

He attempted to reason to their actual existence. For this purpose, he essayed to prove the existence of God. Having arrived at the knowledge of God's existence, who was all-truthful, he then reasoned that, since he had an unconquerable conviction or persuasion that bodies did exist, because clear and distinct ideas represented them to him, God, who was all-wise and truthful, could not endow him with this unconquerable persuasion unless bodies really existed. Otherwise, God would not be an all-truthful being, but a deceiver.

Did he succeed in proving the existence of God? This question brings us finally to a critical examination of Descartes' proof for God's existence.

First proof: He possessed, he said, an idea of God in his soul, an innate idea. The character of this idea was such that it involved all perfections. Now

amongst other perfections which that idea contained in its comprehension was Existence, because it is a perfection to exist. Therefore, God exists.

What are we to think of this argument? There is obviously in this argument the fallacy of the injustifiable transition from the *ideal* order to the *real* order. Every conclusion of reasoning must be of the same nature as the premises from which it is derived. Grant that Descartes had an idea of God in his soul. It was only an idea. All its perfections were ideas. The idea of existence was, indeed, involved in the idea of God. But that idea of existence was still only an idea. The only conclusion, then, that Descartes could derive from the idea of God is that his *idea* of God contained the idea of His existence. Therefore, he should have concluded that the *idea* of God's existence is a fact, but not His actual and real existence. To say that God actually exists because I have an innate idea of God which involves *the idea* of God's existence is to confound the ideal order with the actual or real order.

Second argument: I have, he said, an idea of God. That idea is infinite. Objects outside of me could not form that idea in my mind, nor could I form it by my own power within me, because this infinite idea of God, as an effect in my soul, could not be produced by any finite cause. But I myself am finite and every other cause is finite. The cause that produces something as an effect must possess as much perfection as the effect. No other cause is adequate in its perfections to produce this infinite idea in me except God Himself. Therefore, God exists.

The fallaciousness of this argument is as obvious as that of the first.

Professor Case expresses this argument in syllogistic form, thus—

More reality cannot be produced by less.
But the idea of God has more objective reality than the actual reality of any finite substance.
Therefore, the idea of God cannot be produced by any finite substance, but must be received from God Himself.
Therefore, God, as the cause of this idea, exists.

The major is true. The minor is false, because the objective reality of an *idea* is always less real and less perfect than the actual reality of the thinker, and, therefore, can be produced by him. God, as He exists, has more reality than an existing man, it is true. The *idea* of God has more reality than the *idea* of man. But an actually *existing man* has more reality than his own *idea* of God. We can, therefore, retort on Descartes his own argument:

The less real can be produced by the more real.
The *idea* of God has less reality than the thinker.
Therefore, the idea of God can be produced by the man who thinks it.

Descartes' third argument for the existence of God would be valid in our philosophy. But in Descartes' system the argument is invalid because of other false principles involved in that system.

The argument is the ordinary *"a posteriori"* argument for God's existence. I am an existing being. I know I am imperfect and finite. While I know I exist, I know also that I may not exist. I am, therefore, a contingent being. I must be caused, then, not by another contingent being, because that latter being would demand another cause. I must, therefore, be caused by a necessary Being whose essence is His existence and endowed with infinite perfections. This argument is fully elaborated in Natural Theology.

But for Descartes it would be invalid, if for no other reason than his memorable statement, "I don't see how I can be certain of anything until I know these two truths, that God exists and cannot deceive". If he could know nothing for certain until he knew God existed, how could he know, during the process of proving God's existence, that his argument was true and certain?

One more doctrine of Descartes' system remains for criticism. He teaches that the essence of matter is *extension*—length, breadth, and depth. Now, we can conceive what is known as a vacuum. We can suppose that the intervening space between two bodies may be absolutely emptied by the evacuation of all that exists therein. Still, *extension* would remain in the vacuum. According to Descartes, that mere extension would be a body, because the essence of body is extension. But the conceived supposition is that in a vacuum there is no body, but extension alone. Hence, extension can be conceived as existing without a body. But that conception would be impossible if body were extension. Hence, we conclude that body is not extension. Hence, extension cannot be the essence of a body.

Chapter VI.

OCCASIONALISM

Descartes' writing made so profound and lasting an impression upon his age that his principles inaugurated a revolution in philosophical thought parallel to the revolution which the principles of Luther and the Protestant Reformation brought about in religious thought. So fascinating was his influence that his words were accepted by his disciples almost as those of one who was inspired. Descartes was not, however, the complete and adequate cause of the revolution in thought of which he is now accredited to be the father and founder. Were the minds of men in his day not prepared by a growing opposition towards Scholasticism, engendered by the false principles of the Renaissance and the rising Reformation (Luther died 1546), his writings may have fallen still-born upon an uninterested world. Descartes was as much the product of the Scepticism (witness Montaigne) of his age as his age was, in its thought and tendencies, the product of Descartes. Just as Spiritism is popular in our times, not so much on account of the inherent value of the spiritistic revelations, but rather because a considerable part of the Protestant world, owing to its loss of Christian faith, is prepared to accept and cling to any substitute for Christianity, however extravagant. Men and women must have, by an impelling instinct of human nature, a religion of some kind; so must men and women have a philosophy of some kind.

Descartes has been one of those rare geniuses who has cast into the furrows of human thought certain seed-principles, which, enthusiastically cherished and cultivated as they have been, by his disciples and successors, have deeply influenced the speculation of modern thinkers for the last three hundred years; nor have these Cartesian principles yet spent all their destructive force. It would not be fair, however, to judge Descartes' character by his principles and teachings. Men are sometimes better than their principles. This was the case with Descartes. He himself was a pious and loyal Catholic, but because he broke faith with Scholasticism in order to set philosophy, as he thought, on a more satisfactory basis, successive thinkers eagerly wrested his principles to the prejudice and destruction of Catholic doctrine, so that the Catholic Church was obliged to place on the Index his writings, in 1663, sixty-seven years after his death. The teaching of Descartes' doctrines was prohibited in the universities of France by many royal decrees; several of the Dutch universities also prohibited Cartesianism. Descartes' teachings then met with strong opposition from Rome, France and Holland. Orthodox Protestant clergymen, and especially the Jesuits, made every effort to suppress it.

Opposition, however, seemed to have only increased the devotion of Descartes' admirers and disciples to his principles. Bossuet and Fenelon and many learned priests of the Oratory, pre-eminently Pere Malbranche, whose system we shall see later on, became eager Cartesians. Among the Jansenists who were zealous propagators of Cartesianism were Arnauld, Nicole and Pascal. It was, however, the universities of Utrecht and Leyden in Holland that became the official homes of Cartesianism. Those disciples of Descartes did not, however, merely propa-

gate their master's doctrines as they came from the mind of Descartes. They modified his teachings and gave a new development to his principles. The most famous of those developments of Cartesian principles are now known in the history of thought as—

(1) The Occasionalism of Arnold Geulincx (1625-1669),
(2) The Ontologism of Malebranche (1638-1715),
(3) The Pantheism of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677),
(4) The Pre-Established Harmony of Leibnitz (1646-1716).

Before entering into the exposition of the first of those systems, Occasionalism, we wish to repel the calumny of calling Descartes "the Luther of Philosophy", which is so frequently repeated in histories of philosophy.

Whatever may have been the errors of Descartes, it is a vile calumny, propagated through the ages, to say that Descartes did not respect the authority of the Catholic Church. In repelling the calumny, then, of calling Descartes "the Luther of Philosophy", his own writings are decisive witnesses. Permit me to give some quotations:

Before entering into his philosophical researches, the first rule he lays down for the guidance of his life is, "To obey the laws and customs of my country, adhering firmly to the faith in which, by the grace of God, I had been educated from my childhood." (*Meth.* III.)

In another passage he says: "The truths of faith have ever occupied the first place in my belief." (*Meth.* III.)

Again among the two hundred and seven principles which he lays down in his treatise, *The Principles of Philosophy,* he concludes with this:

"However, I submit all my opinions to the authority of the Church", and continues:

"Nevertheless, lest I should presume too far, I affirm nothing, but submit all these opinions to the authority of the Church and the judgment of the more sage."

In the face of these clear expressions of Descartes' mind no one should be seduced into the belief that, from a religious point of view, there was any sympathy or affinity or shadow of likeness between Descartes and Luther. Such a supposition would be grievously injurious to the memory of Descartes who, as a loyal Catholic, would have shrunk from the thought of openly rebelling against the authority of the Catholic Church. There is no trait in his character which has anything in common with the insubordination and turbulence of Luther.

Were it true that Descartes had flung out the standard of revolt against the Catholic Church as Luther did, a modern English historian of philosophy, George Henry Lewis, the Agnostic husband of the famous "George Elliot", would never have taunted him with timidity and servility. Just because Descartes was professedly a Catholic, Lewis belittles his character by saying: "Descartes was a great thinker; but having said this, we have almost exhausted the praise we can bestow upon him as a man. In disposition he was timid to servility". To Lewis, then, all intelligent Catholics are cowards because they do not apostacize. On that principle Satan would be Lewis's greatest hero. This tendency of prejudiced minds to call the virtues of their neighbors vices is as old as Horace, and as new as the present-day bitter invectives of one class of Americans against the loyalty and Americanism of another class of their fellow citizens.

It is true, however, that the successors of Descartes interpreted his system as favoring "Rationalism". In a true sense, every reasonable man is a Rationalist, that is, he recognizes reason as one of the means of acquiring truth. Modern Rationalism is something quite different. The usually accepted meaning of Rationalism now is that the human reason is the sole source and final test of all truth. It proclaims the independence or autonomy of reason as the natural and only means to all such knowledge and wisdom as man can achieve. Rationalism, therefore, claims that human reason is competent to discover and define religious truth without supernatural aid or divine revelation. "The complete independence or autonomy of reason is, indeed, the offspring of Protestantism", says Paulsen, and continues, "to me it is beyond doubt that the fundamental tendency of primitive Protestantism has here been carried out in all clearness — Luther, too, found in the heart of the individual the unfailing source of truth". (Cf. Donat, *Freedom of Science,* p. 38.) Rationalism, then, leaves no room for faith in the divine word, much less for mystery. It would feign regard doubtful or false what divine revelation proclaims certain and true. Modern Rationalism is only another name for naturalism, because it rejects all knowledge and belief in the supernatural as mysticism and illusion. Rationalism or Naturalism would, then, leave no room for divine faith and mysteries.

The following principle of Descartes, namely, "My first rule is never to accept anything as true, unless I evidently know it to be such" (*Method* II.), gave some color to the accusation that Descartes was a Rationalist in the sense just described. May we not, however, interpret this rule to apply only to naturally acquired knowledge, and the other quotations as wit-

nesses to the fact that he accepted truths supernaturally revealed, and respected unconditionally the authority of the Catholic Church.

We shall now address ourselves to the exposition of the first system which developed in history from the principles of Descartes. This system is known in philosophy as *"Occasionalism"*, and the philosopher most prominently associated with its development was Arnold Geulincx.

In the first place, who was Geulincx?

Arnold Geulincx was born in Antwerp, Belgium (1625). He was 25 years of age, then, when Descartes died. An ardent disciple of Descartes, he was a student and afterwards Professor in the University of Lyon. At this period of his life he was a Catholic priest and member of the Oratory of Jesus. In the University of Lyon he studied philosophy and medicine, took his doctor's degree, and for twelve years lectured in philosophy in his Alma Mater. He was obliged to leave his University, very likely on account of his curious philosophical views. The Jesuits, of course, are blamed for his expulsion from the University. If the Jesuits never existed, any Catholic University would force him to quit. Columbia University a short time ago forced out some of its professors for the same reason. But Mrs. Murray Butler being, I believe, a Catholic, may be a Jesuit in disguise. The unfortunate Geulincx then apostatized and became a Calvinist, adopted the religion of Puritanism, the most extreme form of Protestantism, which Edmund Burke characterized as "the Protestantism of Protestantism; the dissidence of dissent". He was, then, permitted to give private lectures in the University of Leyden, the city of Holland, which, when Geulincx was five years old, was the refugee home of the English Calvanists or Puritans before

their arrival in New England. In Leyden he was very poor. His contemporaries tell us that, were it not for the kindly assistance of some friends, he would have starved or begged his bread.

He wrote several works — *Brochures on Disputed Propositions,* a *Logic,* and *Ethics,* a *Physics* and a *Metaphysics.*

Geulincx's contribution to philosophy was a fuller development of Descartes' principles, which ultimately culminated in the system called "Occasionalism".

What, then, is Occasionalism?

To understand the system we must first clearly grasp what is meant by an *"occasion"* and how it differs from a *"cause",* strictly so-called.

We are here concerned with what is termed *"efficient cause".* That, then, according to Aristotle, is an *"efficient cause"* which is the source or principle of the activity which produces something, or, if you wish, "the agencies in nature which, by their activity, bring about a change which is called effect". The sun is the cause of atmospheric heat, sugar is the cause of the sweetening of my coffee.

An "occasion" is something very different. An "occasion" is any circumstance or combination of circumstances favorable to the action of a free cause. For instance, a forced sale may be the occasion for buying cheaply; night an occasion of theft; bad companionship an occasion of sin. But in these different cases "neither the forced sale" did the cheap buying; "the night" did not perpetrate the theft, nor does a "bad companion" commit the personal sin of his associate. Hence, an occasion is always spoken of in connection with a *free* cause or agent, and it differs from a cause in having no positive and direct influence on the production of the effect. An occasion has, how-

ever, a real, though *indirect,* influence on the production of the effect by soliciting and suggesting the determination of the efficient free cause to act.

Having now understood that a "cause" is an agent that directly produces, by its own inherent activity, some happening or effect, as when we say the sun produces the effect of light and heat, and having understood also that an "occasion" is some favorable circumstance which is taken advantage of by some free cause to do or perform some action which it may not otherwise have thought of doing, as when I may take advantage of the occasion of passing an ice-cream parlor to treat myself and my friends to a plate of that palatable delicacy. Geulincx asked the question, as a good Cartesian, whether there existed in this world real and true *created causes* and real *effects* which are truly produced by these causes?

Does matter, he asked, by its own activity, really act upon matter? When, for instance, H, S and O come together in certain proportions, do they really produce as active, causal agents the chemical compound known as H_2SO_4?

Again, Geulincx asked himself, do the beasts of the field, as genuine causes, produce certain effects by their own activity, as for example, should I be kicked by a mule, is it the mule that is the real cause of my wound?

To turn to the vegetable kingdom, Geulincx was also curious to know whether real causes acted here, whether, for instance, the acorn is a real cause of the growth of the sturdy oak?

Lastly, Geulincx also asked, can matter act upon spirit and spirit upon matter; can this chair, for instance, so act upon me as to determine in my mind the idea of a chair, or, again, is it really my will-action

that initiates the movement of my arm and really causes me to walk, talk, sing or dance?

What answer did Geulincx give to these different questions? Let us first take up the apparent action of matter upon matter.

You recall that Descartes thought that the essence of matter was "extension" and extension alone. Now, extension of three dimensions, length, breadth and depth, is absolutely *inactive*. Extension is in itself *stolidly inert*. It can do nothing. It cannot even move. It is gagged by its own inherent inertia. If it is of its essence inert, it is absolutely impossible, therefore, for matter that is void of all activity to produce a change or effect even in other matter. Hence, Geulincx concluded very logically, from the essential inertness of matter as taught by Descartes, that it can never be a real and true efficient cause.

But you will ask, what brought about the H_2SO_4, if the elements H, S and O by their activities did not? Geulincx will promptly answer that the real, true cause of the H_2SO_4 are not the elemental activities of H, S and O, as you imagine. The real invisible cause that is active in each case is *God and God alone*. God availed Himself, indeed, of the presence of the H and O, and S, as an "occasion" merely, but it was His omnipotent power that directly produced the effect H_2SO_4. Mere matter, on Cartesian principles, could not do so.

Hence, according to the Occasionalists, God is the sole cause of all the changes we observe in the kingdom of matter. Material objects which we, in our simplicity, think are causes are only "occasions" for God's action. That is, God takes advantage of the presence of matter to produce of Himself, directly and immediately, as the one and only acting cause in

change wrought upon the soul. In other words, *there are no secondary causes* acting in the universe. There is only *one cause* that immediately and directly produces every effect in the mineral, vegetable, animal and human world. That one cause is God. This is, briefly, the doctrine of Occasionalism.

Now, there are two questions of paramount importance for the student of the History of Philosophy to understand:

1. From what principles of Descartes' philosophy did the Occasionalists profess to deduce logically their curious system?
2. What were the serious consequences, for morality and religion, that flowed logically from the system of Occasionalism?

1. In answer to the first question, recall that Descartes taught that the body and soul or spirit in man were two wholly distinct, opposite and independent substances; that Descartes confessed that he could form no clear and distinct idea of their *union* or mutual interaction. Yet their union and interaction Descartes seemed to admit. He even made desperate efforts to unite soul and body and explain their interaction. His explanation was that he ascribed all the motions of the body, which was, like minerals, vegetables and animals, a mere automaton, to the motions of what he called the "animal spirits", a kind of subtle fluid that permeated the body, and met the soul in the "pineal gland" in the brain. Those "animal spirits", he asserted, somehow acted upon the soul, and the soul, in turn, gave at least direction to the animal spirits as a driver directs the movements of his horse. But the followers of Descartes did not fail to see that this explanation of the union of soul and of body, and of their mutual interaction, contradicts his already

established principle that spirit could not unite with body or act upon body. Hence, spirit could not act upon the "animal spirits", which were material and of a bodily nature. The only way left, then, to Descartes' followers was to call in the direct intervention of God to unite soul and body, and bring about their interaction by a miracle of His omnipotent power. God alone, then, according to the Occasionalists, is the one and only direct cause of the union and interaction between soul and body. Thus an act of our will (and the extreme Occasionalists, like the Calvinistic Geulincx, taught that even our will was not free, but was moved necessarily by God) is for God merely an *occasion* for His effecting a movement in our limbs, like the raising of our arm, walking or talking, etc.; and an impression made mechanically on our senses is an *occasion* for Him to arouse in our soul a corresponding perception or idea of an external object. To the mind of Geulincx, the transition from the principle of Occasionalism, as applicable to soul and body, to the application of the same principle to the interaction of all other apparent agencies in creation, was very easy. If God is the only cause of the union and interaction of soul and body, He is also the only cause of the union of bodies among themselves. To help out the logical validity of this transition Geulincx introduced into Cartesianism his famous, though curious, principle that "nothing acts that does not know *how* it acts". Hence, in all creation there is only *one cause,* the first cause, — God, and there are *no secondary or created causes. This conclusion brought philosophy to the verge of Pantheism.* The Jew of Amsterdam, Spinoza, a contemporary of Geulincx, promptly deduced, as we shall see, the conclusion of Pantheism. It is a strange fact in the history of thought that every serious deviation of philosophical

systems from Scholasticism sooner or later developed into some form of Pantheism.

2. What were the consequences of Occasionalism in the field of Morality and Religion?

Those withering consequences have, or ought to have, for Americans a peculiar, because a domestic, interest. Because "Occasionalism" formed a philosophical basis on which rested the Calvinistic Puritanism of the early days of New England.

If God, then, does everything both in me and in all other created things, then I can do absolutely nothing. I am incapable of action, for I am not the cause of my actions. I have no will, much less a free will. What, then, is the use of my wishing to be virtuous when I cannot even wish or will to be virtuous or to serve God. If I give up my life for the faith, or sell all my goods to feed the poor, it is not I who do those things. If I shoot a man or commit a burglary, or any crime, it is not I who do those things. God, according to the Occasionalists, does them all. That is the loathsome doctrine of Occasionalism, as it is the execrable doctrine of Puritanism — God caused men to sin, foreordains or *predestines* them to sin, that He might punish them. The Puritans believe they were the chosen of God, foreordained and predestined to virtue without the slightest effort of their own. They were, by the nature of things, effortless. The only reasonable attitude, therefore, to assume in life is an *absolute inactivity,* a surrender of oneself to the unavoidable current of inexorable Fate. *"Ubi nihil vales, nihil velis".* (Cf. *New England Thought, Cath. Mind,* Oct. 22, 1914.) No philosophical system of history has ever attributed to the divine Being a character so loathsome and execrable as did Puritanism". (Moses Coit Tyler, *Amer. Lit.*) The same may be said of Occasionalism. This doctrine opens

the way to the complete annihilation of all created things, because if creatures cannot do anything, why should they exist?

Chapter VII.

ONTOLOGISM

The restless mind of man cannot but press a principle to the utmost limit of its implications even though centuries should intervene between the premises and the conclusion.

The embryonic principles implanted in the bosom of any new system of thought rarely reach their maturity during the lifetime of its founder. They usually await the process of mental incubation in the minds of disciples and followers of the original founder before their full significance is fully developed and made manifest. If the original principles of the founder are true, they will bring forth fruit wholesome, sound and beautiful. If these same original principles are false, by their evil fruits you shall know them.

Hence, it is that according to the second method of criticism heretofore indicated, the truth or falsehood of the principles embosomed in Descartes' philosophy must stand or fall by the wholesomeness or poisonous character of the conclusions that have been logically deduced from them by his admirers and disciples.

The "Occasionalism" of Geulincx was the first fruit of Occasionalism in the order of time. Its interpretation of nature may be reduced to the simple formula — *all the created beings in the world, whether matter or spirit, are inert, devoid of all inherent activity of themselves.* They are incapable of acting upon one another because they cannot, of themselves, act of

all. Hence, there are no *created* causes whatsoever. God is the only cause. What a strange conception of nature such a theory sets before our vision! It suggests that all created nature, be it matter or spirit, is, as it were, in cold storage, and frozen into inactivity and inertia. Remark that, as a philosophical system, it suggests the denial of *free-will* and this denial of free-will was at the basis of the Calvinistic or Puritan religion, the religion of New England in Colonial days, and the religion of Cromwell's round heads in England. It involves the fearful doctrine of Calvinistic Predestination. If the multiplicity of material things as well as human souls have no real activity of their own, distinct from the activity of their First Cause — God, on what ground could we suppose them to have a real *existence* of their own, distinct from God? Would not the logical inference be justified that material and spiritual beings have no real existence in themselves, but are all merely phases or aspects of God? Because, as far as we are concerned, we can know objects because their actions come under our observation. But since Geulincx assures us that the only active agent that is at the back of all material objects and souls is God alone, then we ought reasonably conclude that God alone exists, and what we call matter and souls have no existence at all in themselves. There is, therefore, in existence only one substance and that is divine. This is the formula that expresses Pantheism.

Within thirty years after the death of Descartes, this conclusion, which was latent in his system, rapidly matured, through the two-fold stages of "Occasionalism" and "Ontologism", into the rank and open Pantheism of Baruch Spinoza. No wonder, then, that some Protestants, Jesuits and other Catholic philosophers were, from the beginning, keen to perceive the

fatal consequences that were implicitly contained in the principles of Descartes. Nor are we surprised that six years after his death the Synod of Dortrecht (1656) forbade theologians to adopt Descartes' system, that Rome put his writings on the Index "until corrected" (1663), and in 1671 the exposition of Descartes' doctrine was prohibited by royal decree in the University of Paris.

Before setting before you, however, the ultimate development of Cartesianism into Pantheism of Spinoza, we shall be obliged to give a brief exposition of the second development of Descartes' principles on the onward march toward the precipice of Monism or Pantheism. This second stage is called "Ontologism", and its father and founder was the famous Nicholas Malbranche. It must be remembered that he, too, like Geulincx, was an Occasionalist. Nicholas Malebranche was born in Paris August 6, 1638. The son of a royal officer, he was, of a family of many children, the youngest and weakest. Indeed, he was so afflicted in his early manhood by a nausea of the stomach that for twenty years every attempt to take food was painful. He was unusually tall and thin, and, unfortunately, deformed by a curvature of the spine. His head alone was well developed, his eyes fiery, and the expression of his countenance was mild and amiable. He bore his afflictions with great patience, lived temperately, cultivated his mind in peace and quietness, and thereby preserved his life to the age of seventy-seven. Destined for the priesthood, he studied philosophy in the College of De Marche, and took his theological course in the Sorbonne. Like Descartes, his studies left him dissatisfied. With these feelings of dissatisfaction, he became, at the age of twenty-one, a priest of the Oratory of Jesus. Not until Malebranche was twenty-six years did he himself

or anybody else discover his philosophical talents. It was a mere accident that revealed to him his latent abilities. Walking along the Rue St. Jacque, he entered a book-store. His attention was called to the latest literary novelty, *The Treatise of Man,* by Descartes. He took the book home, read it, and his enthusiasm and admiration were aroused. For the first time he felt the charm of philosophy. He had to put the book down more than once, because his throbbing heart would not let him read further. At last he felt his mind alienated from all other subjects, and for ten years was completely absorbed in the study of Descartes. At the end of this period he published his famous book, *The Investigation of Truth,* which rapidly went through six editions. Other books followed, and so much was he admired that Buffon called him "the divine Malebranche".

Despite his love of quiet, the rest of his life was occupied in bitter controversies with the Jansenist Arnauld, with the Jesuits, with Fenelon and Bossuet. He lived in his cell in the Oratory in such deep retirement for half a century that he was called the silent and meditative man. Many distinguished visitors to Paris paid their respects to him. A story is told that during his last illness he was visited by Berkeley, the Irish philosopher, and the eager conversation that followed about the existence of matter hastened his death. He died after four months of suffering, October 13, 1715.

What, then, was the system of Ontologism of which Malebranche was the founder and of whom the first English translator (1694) of his well-known work, *The Investigation of Truth* (1675), Richard Sault, says: "The very faults of this great man have something in them extremely beautiful, and the jewel is so dazzling that the flaws are scarce discerned"?

Unlike "Occasionalism", Ontologism is not an explanation *of the causes of the manifold and varied changes* observed around us; it is a theory, rather, of *knowledge* or the *origin of our ideas.*

Malebranche, with remarkable brevity, enumerates all the possible explanations to account for the origin of our ideas in B. III., C. I., of his *Investigation of Truth.* He writes: "We are assured that it is absolutely necessary that the ideas we have of bodies, and of all other objects which we perceive *not by themselves,* either proceed (1) from these bodies or these objects (Scholasticism), or else that (2) our souls have the power of producing these ideas (Subjective Idealism); or that (3) God created them with our souls (Descartes' innate ideas); or that God (4) produces them every time that we think of any object (Occasionalism); or, in fine, *that our soul is* (5) *united with a perfect Being which in general includes all the perfection of created beings".*

Now, Malebranche rejects the four first explanations and adopts the last, to wit, that the soul is intimately united with the perfect Being of God, Who includes all the perfection of Created things; that our minds, therefore, "see all things in God". He teaches, then, the extraordinary doctrine that our ideas of objects around us, or within us, are not derived in any way from these objects themselves, as we suppose, but that we see God by our intellect directly and immediately, by an intuitive vision, *and in God we see all things.*

Farther on in his book he explains more in detail the curious origin of our ideas in the soul.

"All beings, he says, "can only be present to our mind because God is present to it, that is, He who includes all things in the simplicity of His being". (B. III., C. VI.) Descartes, you remember, made

consciousness the discoverer of ideas that were inborn or innate in our own souls. He *looked into himself* to gaze at ideas already formed and representative, as he thought, of the things outside of us. Scholasticism *looks out* upon objects and teaches *that it is these objects* that are, somehow, the determining causes of our ideas. Malebranche neither *looks into* his soul *nor out* upon objects, but *looks up* to God, "Who" he says, "is very strictly united to our souls by His presence, so that we may say that He is the place of spirits, as space is the place of bodies. . . ." "It is certain, then", he continues, "that the mind may see what there is in God, which represents created things". Malebranche rejected Descartes' innate ideas, because, as he argues, his theory was simpler, and "God", he says, "never does, by very difficult means what may be done by a plain, easy way". (B. III. C. VI.) When we know objects, then, Malebranche's theory is, that we do not know them through our perception of ideas *within our soul,* representative of outer objects, as Descartes taught, or *by perceiving them directly in themselves,* as the Scholastics teach, but we know them by contemplating the ideas of them in God, — the Malebranchian mystical theory of Ontologism.

As a theory, then, to explain the origin of our ideas, Ontologism professes to be a logical deduction from the same principle of Cartesianism that produced Occasionalism. Hence, the Ontologists taught the doctrine of Occasionalism to explain all the effects produced in material nature, which ordinary common-sense men attribute to the efficiency of natural or secondary causes.

But since body and soul, whose essence is "thought" and "extension" respectively, cannot interact on each other, it is impossible for the idea of body or extension

to arise in the soul from the determining causality, in any sense, of bodies themselves. The idea of extension of bodies is in the mind of God alone, and we know the ideas of created things only in God.

How, then, do we invest material objects with sensuous qualities? Malebranche gives this curious answer. He says: "But though I say that we see in God the things that are material and sensible, it must be observed that I do not say we have a sensation of them in God, but only that it is from God, who acts in us; for God knows sensible things, but He does not feel them. When we perceive anything that is sensible, sensation and pure idea is in our perception (subjective). Sensation is a modification of our soul, and it is God Who causes it in us. And He may cause it, though He has it not, because He sees, in the idea He has of our soul, that it is capable of it. As for the idea that is joined to sensation, it is in God we see it, because it is His pleasure to discover it to us. And God joins sensation to the idea, when objects are present, to the end that we may have such sensations and passions as we ought to have in relation to them". (B. III., C. VI., *Investig. of Truth.*)

Analyzing this novel doctrine of Malebranche, we find that he teaches the following strange doctrines: (1) "We see in God the things that are material". Hence we do not see or perceive at all material things in themselves. We perceive material things, because our minds, having a direct and intuitive vision of God, perceive the ideas of those material things in God. The divine ideas are the prototypes or models or patterns of material things. They represent material things. Hence in perceiving the patterns of material things, we perceive those material things in their patterns or models. (2) "When we perceive anything that is sensible, Malebranche says,

"sensation and pure idea is in our perception". That, of course, we admit. It is the teaching of our experience. The pure, intellectual idea is according to our author, not, however, our idea, but the idea of God which we contemplate. But whence comes the sensation that accompanies the pure idea? "I do not say", says Malebranche, "we have a sensation of them in God, but it (*i. e.,* the sensation) is from God, who acts in us". The sensation, then, that accompanies the pure idea is produced by God in our souls. "Sensation", he says, "is a modification of our soul, and it is God who causes it in us". Here Malebranche reveals his Occasionalism. If the sensations, then, of color, sound, heat, taste and smell, etc., are merely modifications of our souls, known to consciousness alone, how can we ever know that there is anything in objects that correspond to them? Consciousness can never know anything outside of us, but only our own subjective experiences. And the difficulty of knowing whether anything outside of us corresponds to our sensations is aggravated by Malebranche and the Cartesian Occasionalists, because they teach that bodies or material things are not even the determining cause of our sensations. "For it is God", Malebranche teaches, "who acts in us and *causes our sensations*". Some philosophers, even Catholic philosophers, and many scientists, hold that color, sound, etc., as such, are not objectively in bodies as we imagine them to be, but, at least, all philosophers and scientists, who are not Idealists, admit that those qualities are *causally,* if not *formally,* in bodies, that is, bodies cause those sensations in us. But Malebranche would deny even a causal existence of those qualities in bodies, since it is God who causes our sensations.

It is only *extension* which is identified with bodies, because it is, according to Malebranche and the Car-

tesians, the essence of bodies that exist outside of us. Yet we do not perceive, according to Malebranche, extension or bodies in themselves. We contemplate the idea of extension in God, Malebranche teaches, and since the divine idea of extension represents, or is the pattern of created extension or body, we know created extension or bodies outside of us and of God, because we contemplate its pure idea in God. Yet Malebranche maintains that when we contemplate the divine idea of extension, we do not form in our minds any human idea of the divine idea. The idea of extension or body which we contemplate in God serves all the purposes of our knowing bodies outside of us. But how it is possible to contemplate an idea in God without forming in our souls our own idea of that idea is difficult to understand unless we are ourselves identical with God. But to make ourselves identical with God would, of course, be Pantheism, and there was not wanting future philosophers who drew this Pantheistic conclusion.

Finally, all knowledge to Malebranche is a divine revelation, and ultimately rests on revelation. We acquire no knowledge directly and naturally of things around us. "Because", says Malebranche, "it is His (God's) pleasure to discover it (*i.e.*, the divine idea of a thing) to us". But the divine ideas were present in God throughout all eternity. How do we know that God actually created the things of the universe according to the model of His ideas? If we do not know that creation took place, we may contemplate God's ideas and yet not know that anything actually created corresponds with them. Malebranche and the Ontologists were driven to answer: "We know creation has taken place from the revelation in Genesis". Thus it is obvious that all our knowledge depends ultimately on revelation, that it is not *knowledge* strictly so-

called, but only *belief* or *faith.* This doctrine destroys all possibility of naturally acquired knowledge and opens the way to Fideism, which subsequent philosophers have advocated. (4) We have in the above quotation a corroboration of this doctrine of Fideism, or that all knowledge is faith. Because Malebranche, in his explanation of why God produces sensations in our souls, says: "and God joins sensation to the idea when objects are present, to the end that we may *believe* them as they are, and that we may have such sensations and passions as we ought to have in relation to them". Hence, even if our sensations gave us any insight into the qualities of bodies, we could not *know* those sensuous qualities of bodies, but only believe or have faith in their existence. Endless are the novel aberrations of the human mind. Descartes' philosophy and its development are for the most part discredited to-day, but the passion for novelties in thought which he inaugurated by breaking with the past quickly developed into unbridled "freedom of thought" that has expressed itself in modern times in a passion for novelty and change, which is called progress, whereas, in reality, the continuous abandonment of what we have previously gained to adopt what is entirely new is not progress, but destruction.

Chapter VIII.

THE PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY OF LEIBNITZ AND THE PANTHEISM OF SPINOZA

The restless pendulum of human thought is continually swinging from one extreme to the other. In the history of philosophy, it is a common-place to observe that every novel intellectual movement seems to be followed by a reaction. Critics, in their indignation and zeal for truth, repudiate the exaggerations; the new leaders swing to the opposite extreme. Hence, the Cartesians assure us that we can know truth only by the exercise of pure intellect or reason. The Empiricists, on the other hand, confidently assert that reason is to be discredited and that all knowledge is sense-knowledge. Materialists maintain that nothing exists but matter; Spiritual Idealists are just as dogmatic in saying there is nothing but spirit and the modifications of spirit. Thus it was that in the last development of Cartesianism, which we examined, the Ontologists assured us that we have an immediate vision of God, that we see Him face to face, while the modern Agnostics, Spencer, Kant, etc., are just as cock-sure that the human mind is incapable of knowing anything about God at all. Leibnitz became the champion of a pluralistic universe. He taught that substances were infinitely many. Spinoza, on the contrary, was frankly Pantheistic, and became for all time the protagonist of the principle that "there is only one substance and that that substance is divine",

but in a sense entirely different from that which Christians attribute to the Divine Being.

It is our present purpose to give, in the first place, a brief exposition of the system of Leibnitz, which is known in the history of thought as "Pre-Established Harmony," and, secondly, an explanation of the Pantheism of Spinoza. This Pantheistic system of Spinoza reveals the final development and culmination of the embryonic conclusions that were, from the first, latent in the principles of Descartes.

Who, then, was Leibnitz?

Leibnitz (the name is Polish or Bohemian) was, perhaps, the greatest of the Cartesians. He ranks not merely as a philosopher, but a courtier and a man of affairs, who took a leading part in the political life of his time. He was, besides, one of the greatest mathematical geniuses of the world, sharing the honor of inventing Differential Calculus with Newton. He was the founder of German philosophy. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716) was born at Leipsic, where his father was Professor of Moral Philosophy. He studied there and in Jena and received his doctor's degree at the age of twenty. He was destined for the legal profession and entered the diplomatic service of the Elector of Mayence. In this capacity he travelled as member of an embassy to Paris and London. He paid a visit to Spinoza at the Hague, and afterwards became court librarian at Hanover. His manifold activities led him to make frequent visits to Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Italy. The Pope offered him the headship of the Vatican library, a position which, of course, he declined, as its acceptance would have required him to become a Catholic. At the instance of the Prussian Queen, Sophie Charlotte, a princess of great culture, he wrote his famous work, *Theodicy* or *Natural Theology*. His spirit of conciliation to

bring together opposing schools of thought inspired him with an effort to reconcile the Protestant and Catholic churches. He was one of the most learned men of his time, and "in the union of productive and universal knowledge, Aristotle alone", says Alexander, "can be compared to him".

His chief works were his *Theodicy* (1710), *Monadology* (1714), *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humane* (1765). In this essay his criticism of the Empiricism of Locke embodied in the following statement, *"Nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu, misi intellectus ipse"*, is famous. He died in Vienna, in 1716, loaded with honors. The latter part of his life is said to be embittered by his quarrels with the Newtonians.

What, then, was the curious doctrine of "Pre-Established Harmony"?

Leibnitz, the last of the great Cartesians, was an original thinker, conversant not only with the philosophy of Descartes, but learned in Plato and Aristotle, and well acquainted with Scholasticism, of which he spoke in the highest praise. The founder of philosophy in Germany, the dream of his life was to bring once more together into unity the different religious bodies. He introduced into Cartesianism many ideas inspired by Plato. It was remarked by Schlegel that every philosopher is in bent of mind either a Platonist or Aristotelian. The fundamental difference between their philosophies is that while Aristotle and his followers, the Schoolmen, hold that all our knowledge in some way or other begins in sense knowledge, *"nihil est in intellectu, nisi prius fuerit in sense"*, being an axiom of Aristotle and Scholasticism, Plato and the Platonists maintain that the mind contains, as its original endowment, ideas and principles which are not caused by external objects, but which are only

aroused or awakened by our different sensations. Hence, Leibnitz, admitting, like Descartes, innate ideas, was a Platonist.

Leibnitz likewise accepted the well-known Cartesian doctrine of the impossibility of any interaction between soul and body — the famous dualism of the Cartesians. Yet Leibnitz, as his system reveals, was not an Occasionalist. Soul and body seem to interact. How, then, does Leibnitz explain their apparent interaction? Already we have reviewed the Occasionalistic and Ontologistic answer. What was Leibnitz' solution of the same problem? It is known in philosophy as the theory of "Pre-Established Harmony".

In what did the solution of "Pre-Established Harmony" consist? It was a most ingenious theory; yet it had little influence on Modern thought. It was too far-fetched to be considered probable, and too intricate to be appealing.

The ultimate, constituent elements of every being in the whole range of existence are what Leibnitz called "monads". These monads are not like atoms, that is, small masses, whose essence, in the Cartesian system, was extension, indefinitely divisible. The monads are, on the contrary, simple, unextended substances replete with energy always active. They are *points of force* or metaphysical points. Hence, force is substance and substance is force. Leibnitz rejected the mass-atom. Because, Leibnitz argued, there must be simple, indivisible substances since there are compounds, "for the compound is only a collection or aggregate of simples". (*Monadology.*)

Each monad, even those that constitute the ultimate principles of ordinary matter, are, in the strange teaching of Leibnitz, *spirits* or *souls,* or at least analogous to spirits.

There are no soulless bodies, no dead matter. The inorganic does not exist. Every particle of dust is peopled with a multitude of living beings. Every portion of matter is like a pond filled with fish or a garden full of plants. "Whence it appears", said Leibnitz, "that there is a world of creatures of living things, of animals or souls, in the minutest portion of matter. Every particle of matter may be conceived as a garden of plants or as a pond full of fishes". (*Monad.*)

Every monad is endowed with *perception* and *appetite,* but in different degrees of perfection. The monads, which are the ultimate constituents of what we call inorganic matter and vegetables, though endowed with perception and appetite, are yet unconscious. In animals, at least, one monad, which gives unity to the whole being, becomes to a certain degree conscious. The souls of men as monads become more perfectly self-conscious. Hence, human souls are endowed with what Leibnitz calls *apperception* or consciousness in opposition to *perception* which, as such, is unconscious.

All created monads are, according to the degree of their perfection, a likeness or image of the one infinite, uncreated monad — God the Creator. Hence, all created monads are graded according to their perfection, so that they rise in the scale of perfection from the lowest monads, which constitute matter, to the highest monad. God is the first, uncreated, conscious, infinitely perfect monad. Human souls are next in rank. Material substances, including the body of man, hold the lowest place. Yet even those material monads are spirits or souls, though devoid of consciousness. "All simple substances or created monads", Leibnitz says, "may be called souls".

There are no two monads alike. Their difference arises from the fact that though each monad represents the universe yet each represents it differently. This difference consists in the degree of clearness of the representation. There is no really transient action between the monads. No monad acts upon another. "The monads", says Leibnitz, "have no windows through which anything can enter or go forth".

Each monad, through its power of perception, whether conscious or unconscious, reflects, as in a mirror, more or less perfectly all that is taking place within the other monads of the entire universe. Each monad is a little, independent universe in itself — "a microcosm imaging the macrocosm".

One of the most extraordinary doctrines of Leibnitz was the immortality of all things in the universe. Matter, vegetables, animals are, like the souls of men, immortal. Because their ultimate constituents — the soul-monads — are immortal. Nothing begins to be except by creation, nothing can end except by annihilation — "There is no way", Leibnitz said, "in which a simple substance can begin naturally, since it could not be formed by composition. Therefore, we may say that monads can neither begin nor end in any other way than all at once; that is to say, they cannot begin except by creation, nor end except by annihilation". (*Monad.*) Hence, according to Leibnitz, all monads are naturally immortal, like the souls of men. Hence, pre-existence as well as post-existence must be conceded both to animals and to men.

The union of soul and body, a problem which neither Descartes nor the Cartesians succeeded in explaining, presented itself to Leibnitz for solution. How did Leibnitz solve this problem?

The body, Leibnitz taught, is an aggregate of living soul-monads, each an active living force. But

since each monad of this aggregate is immaterial and, therefore, simple, it follows that a collection of any number of simple substances could never explain the phenomenon of an extended mass. But the phenomenon of extended mass appears to exist in bodies. How does Leibnitz explain this phenomenon of extension which our body seems to present? This phenomenon of extended mass, Leibnitz taught, was an illusion of sensuous perception. Matter or extended mass was not really objective. Matter is only something present in sensation in a confused representation. Space and time are also nothing real, but only ideal things. Our confused sensuous perception of the collection of monads composing a body is regarding as a continuous unity something, perhaps, like the illusion of perceiving the swiftly moving spokes of a wheel as a continuous unity. The soul is a monad quite independent of the body, yet dominating the collection of monads that constitute the body, because of the superior clearness with which it represents what is taking place in the body monads. The soul and body of each person have been so created and mated by God as to run like two clocks, so excellently constructed that, without needing to be regulated by each other, they show exactly the same time. The changes, then, whether they be ideas or motions arising in each individual's soul, are in exact harmony with the same series of changes arising in each individual's body. Thus did Leibnitz hold that all phenomena of perception and volition are adequately accounted for. Such is the ingenious theory of the Pre-Established Harmony of Leibnitz.

Leibnitz gives this account of his curious theory: He says, "I cannot help coming to this notion that God created the soul in such a manner at first that it should *represent within itself* all the simultaneous

changes in the body; and that he made the body also in such a manner that it must *of itself* do what the soul wills".

Leibnitz may be said to be an exaggerated optimist. Because he taught that this created world is the best world God could create. God, the Creator, he argued, is infinitely intelligent, omnipotent and infinitely good. When God created the universe, then, he gave expression to the best possible combination of possible existences, and, therefore, created the best possible world. Not that the world is absolutely perfect, but it is the most perfect among all possible worlds.

It may be well to contrast the outstanding differences between the system of Leibnitz and that of Descartes. They are—

(1) Leibnitz taught that matter is not, as Descartes maintained, an inert, dormant, inactive mass, whose essence is extension or length, breadth and depth. Leibnitz maintained, on the contrary, that the ultimate constituents of matter, namely, monads, were intrinsically active points of force. All changes in them proceeded from an internal principle. Leibnitz, therefore, rejected the mechanical theory of Descartes to explain all the changes in the material universe. Extension, then, which in Descartes' system held such an important place, was to Leibnitz a mere sensuous illusion, which had no objective reality, because each and all things were spirits or souls.

(2) Leibnitz was not an Occasionalist like Geulincx and Malebranche. Leibnitz rejected Occasionalism, because it involved an endless series of miracles.

(3) According to Descartes some ideas (pure concepts) are innate, according to Leibnitz all ideas are innate. According to Locke, as we shall afterwards see, no ideas are innate.

We shall complete the chief systems that developed from the principles of Descartes by an exposition of the Pantheism of Baruch Spinoza. The developments with Descartes' own system are known as Cartesianism.

Baruch or Benedict Spinoza or De Spinoza, the Jew of Amsterdam, was born November 24th in that city, 1632, and died in the Hague, 1677. His parents were Jewish-Portuguese extraction. His teacher in Hebrew was the celebrated Rabbi Marteira, who introduced him to the study of the Talmud and the Bible. He studied Latin also under the noted physician, Franz von der Edde. Brought up in the Hebrew faith, he was expelled from the Jewish community on account of his "frightful heresies". Though interested in Christianity and the life and the teaching of Christ, he never formally accepted the Christian faith. He lived in great retirement, engaged in his philosophical pursuits, took lodgings with a landlady of the Calvinistic creed, and supported himself by the polishing of lenses. He lived a frugal life. He was not without friends, but from them he would never accept monetary aid. He was called to the professor's chair at Heidelberg, but declined, on the ground that he might be there hindered in the full liberty of thought. Of a delicate constitution, he died of consumption at the age of forty-four.

His writings are: *The Principles of the Philosophy of Descartes; Tractatus Theologico-Politicus; Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione; Epistolae; Treatise Concerning God and Man; Ethica*—In this latter work is contained his philosophical system. Diverse opinions have been entertained of Spinoza. Dugald Stewart sees in his philosophy black Atheism, Novalis, a moral and honest man. "Avoid what is evil", he says, "because it is opposite to my nature

and draws me away from the knowledge of and love of God".

The Pantheistic doctrine of Spinoza took for its starting-point Descartes' definition of *Substance.* "By substance", says Descartes, "we can conceive nothing else than a thing which exists in such a way as to stand in need of nothing beyond itself in order to its existence". (*Prin. of Phil.,* Pt. I., 51.) Descartes distinguished the uncreated (*substantia a se*) from created substance (*substantia ab alio*). But Spinoza, casting aside Descartes' created substance, adopted the first. Thus did Descartes' peculiar concept of substance leave the way wide open for Spinoza to assert that, since the Descartes' substance "stands in need of nothing beyond itself in order to its existence", there can exist only one substance — God. Hence, Spinoza, following closely on Descartes, thus defines substance — "I mean", he says, "by substance that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; in other words, that of which a conception can be formed, independently of any other conception". Spinoza argued that from this definition of substance the following conclusions logically follow:

(1) that substance has no cause, otherwise it should be conceived as dependent on its cause, and thus would not be "independent of any other conception".

(2) that substance is infinite, because if it had limitations, those limitations would demand a cause independent of the original substance, and hence this latter could not be conceived as independent.

(3) Hence, there can be only one substance, because its infinitude excludes all limitations.

> The only substance that exists, Spinoza concludes, is God, and there is no other substance in existence besides God. Therefore, God is the same as the world and nature. *There is only one substance, then, in all existence, and that substance is divine.*

This is the fundamental statement of Pantheism. There is, therefore, no plurality of substances as we imagine. Every particular substance, which seems to us to exist, whether it be spirit or matter, is only a modification, aspect or attribute of the one universal substance — God. All things, therefore, are identified with God. They are God. "I think that I have shown sufficiently", writes Spinoza (*Prop.*, XVI.), "that from the supreme power or infinite nature of God, all things have resulted, or do, ever with the same necessity, result, in the same manner in which, from everlasting to everlasting, it results from the nature of a triangle, that its three angles are equal to two right angles". "Thought", which constitutes, according to Descartes, the spiritual world, and "extension", which constitutes the material world, are both attributes of the divine substance. Hence, the "exaggerated dualism" of the Cartesians is reduced to unity. This one, all-embracing substance is impersonal, because it does not act intelligently for any purpose, nor is it free, except in the Spinozian sense, of not being dependent. It evolves itself from its own inner necessity. All its attributes proceed from it with the same necessity as geometrical properties flow from the nature of a circle or triangle. Hence, there is no freedom of the human will, because human beings are merged in God. The laws of nature are absolutely immutable, hence, miracles are impossible. There is no immortality of the soul, because there is

no soul existing in itself outside of God. Hence, we ourselves and all things around us, are only like tiny wavelets in the great ocean of substance; we roll our little course and sink to rise no more. There is no God independent of the universe and no creation. Such is the theory of our modern pagans and atheists. Such is the theory towards which Cartesianism logically conducts us, such is the despairing theory to which much of modern thought leads.

Not many years ago in New England the school of Transcendentalists, whose leaders were Emerson, Bronson Alcott and Theodore Parker, were Pantheists. Bronson Alcott, for instance, once said:

"I am God. I am greater than God. God is one of my ideas. I therefore contain God; greater is the container than the contained. Therefore, am I greater than God." And again, "Man is a rudiment and embryon God".

Josiah Royce, late Professor of Philosophy in Harvard, who quotes Spinoza so often with approval, was frankly Pantheistic or Monistic in his teaching. He writes, for instance, "There is one absolute World-Self; *who embraces and is all reality,* whose consciousness includes, and infinitely transcends, our own". (*The Spirit of Modern Philosophy,* p. 349.)

The extreme Evolutionists who assert that matter alone is, and that it is eternal, ever evolving itself by itself into the multiplicity of forms and beings around us, are, like Haeckel, Materialistic Monists or Pantheists, as Professor Royce was an Idealistic Monist, like Hegel and Fichte. Truly the errors of Descartes and the Cartesians possess a logical fecundity in producing other errors. When the foundations of a building are rotten, it is not likely that the upper stories will be stable.

Chapter IX.

SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM CARTESIANISM

Many practical people imagine that philosophers are always thinking in the clouds and that the *principles* they set forth have no bearing on practical life. It is true that philosophers work out their principles in the upper regions of lonely thought, as the rain is formed in the silent clouds. But just as the rain falls to earth and moistens unto growth its hidden seeds, so do the principles of men of thought soon find their way into the minds of the men in the street, mould their convictions and thereby set in motion the springs of human action. Should those principles be sound and wholesome, so will the actions of the masses, which are the natural fruitage of those principles, be likewise sound and wholesome. Should those principles, on the other hand, be unsound and false, they will express themselves in a crop of destructive and evil actions. As a general, who is usually invisible to the great masses of troops, directs the movements of the army, so philosophical principles of some kind, whether true or false, are the invisible inspiring motives of all great movements in history.

Now, Cartesianism, which we have just studied, affords a practical and striking example of the application of the above principles. Descartes, no doubt, was one of the great minds of all time. He, during his own lifetime, proposed and popularized certain germinal principles, the logical implications of which his

disciples forthwith developed into the further systems of Occasionalism (Geulincx), Ontologism (Malebranche), both of which were gradually shaping and bringing to full maturity that hideous synthesis of all contradictions which finally emerged from the embryonic principles of Descartes — the monster of Pantheism. Pantheism is practical Atheism, a word hated of all men, a doctrine that is destructive of a Personal God as the Creator of all things, destructive of all hope of immortality, of free-will, consequently, of religion and morality. Such was the outcome, mark it well, of what the modern non-Catholic world hails as the most brilliant period of French philosophy — the age of Cartesians.

With the view of emphasizing the danger of harboring false principles, allow me to anticipate the final outcome of the philosophy of two other great nations, England and Germany. As Descartes was the father of French philosophy, so *John Locke* is reputed to be the father of English philosophy. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, when Cartesianism began to decline, John Locke was enthusiastically hailed as the opponent of Descartes, and the precursor of the newest fashion in philosophical thought. Locke, too, during the eighteenth century had many ardent disciples. They quickly developed the logical implications of his principles. And though Locke himself was not a Materialist, any more than Descartes was a Pantheist, yet in half a century Locke's system developed into rank Materialism.

Kant of Germany rejected, in turn, the English philosophy of Materialism, and inaugurated what is known to-day as German philosophy. In the hands of Kant's disciple, Fichte, and, subsequently, of Shelling and Hegel, Kantianism quickly matured into Idealistic Pantheism, which is nothing more than an-

other form of advanced Atheism. Hence, that climax of human monstrosities — Nietzsche, could say — *"God is dead, long live the transcendental man"*. Such, in briefest outline, is the boasted outcome of modern intellectuality.

Set before your mind and consider calmly this remarkable fact: What professed to be the best minds of France, England and Germany applied their human reason with prodigious energy and labor to solve the great problems of philosophy — the existence and attributes of God, the origin and destiny of man and the material world, the relations that exist between the Creator and the Creature, the obligations and duties of religion and morality. They all possessed the same faculty of reason. The same *data* were before their minds. The Frenchman, the Englishman, the German started with high hopes of success. As conclusion followed conclusion in the mind of each, their paths became widely divergent, and their ultimate answers, to the problems they set out to solve, mutually contradictory. No one, not even the philosophers of their own schools, are satisfied with their solutions. From the days of Descartes to the present day, in all the most cultured and highly civilized countries, human reason has exercised itself in a riot of freedom in the solution of "the riddle of the universe" and with what result? Confusion worse confounded, strife among the members of the rationalistic churches, all kinds of fads and vagaries prancing about their pulpits, Spiritualists vomiting their ectoplasm, Christian Science trying to ignore bodily disease, and Liberals tearing to pieces the remnants of Catholicity preserved by the Fundamentalists. Such, in brief, is the story of the failure of non-Catholic philosophies since the time of the Reformation.

Driven by a yearning for truth, which lives in the breast of every man, did a Descartes, a Locke, a Kant, a Hegel — the representative minds of the modern non-Catholic world — embark, like so many mariners with brave determination, unquestioned sincerity and singleness of purpose upon the high seas of thought, to discover for the human race the true solution that would be universally accepted as satisfactory and convincing of the ultimate course and final destiny of man and of the visible world around him. With high hopes of success, they, and hundreds of less brilliant minds, loosened their sails of *reason* to the breeze of their personal genius. Thousands of their non-Catholic brethren cheered them on, and bade them "bon voyage". Patiently did the latter await on the shore for their philosophers' triumphant return, to receive, at last, an *harmonious* message from their lips that would for ever more solve the "riddle of the universe". Their gallant intellectuals return. They deliver their messages. The Gallic savant, in his excellent French style, declares that the ultimate conclusion of his rational explorations is Pantheism. The vast majority of his audience turned away in disgust.

The English philosopher takes the platform, and with Saxon bluntness declares that the ultimate explanation and destiny of all things are dust and matter. An indignant cry of protest is heard from his audience,

> "Dust thou art, to dust returneth,
> Was not spoken of the soul."

The brusque German, the great Kant, appears. "I have spent twelve years in my explorations of discovery", he says, "and I have found out that no man can know the existence of God by reason. A thing in itself exists, but nobody can know anything about it.

You cannot know even your own *real* selves. We live in a dreamland. We know only the phantoms of things — the projections of our own mind — phenomena."

As you study the history of non-Catholic modern thought, you will be convinced that the findings of non-Catholic philosophers during the last three hundred years are a Babel of contradictions mutually destructive of one another.

Are we, then, as witnesses of this tragedy of failure, to despair of the ability of *individual human reason of itself* to discover with certainty that God the Creator of all things exists, and that we owe Him reverence and service? Certainly not. That would be the contention of *extremists,* who, like Luther and Calvin and all the first Protestant reformers, held the incapacity of reason to know anything about God or morals as a logical sequence from their false conceptions of original sin. This impotency of natural reason to know anything of God is the traditional teaching of Protestantism, both liberal and orthodox, even at the present day. Reason, indeed, is finite, is fallible, is limited in its field of vision, still it is not subject in all things about God to delusion. We do not agree with those who would, then, depress reason too much, and reduce man to the level of the irrational creation, any more than we agree with those other *extremists* who would set man above archangels and make his intellect *divine.*

We hold, with the sound philosophy of the ages, that individual reason is perfectly competent *of itself* to acquire with unerring certainty an indefinite number of natural truths, and that among those truths that thus naturally come within the province of reason are to be reckoned *the existence of God and the evidences of Christianity.* "For the invisible things

of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity: so that they are inexcusable". (*St. Paul, Rom.* C. I., 20. See also *Wisd.*, C. XIII-1: *Psalms* XVIII-2.)

This is the teaching of St. Thomas of Aquin. He says: "In the things which we confess about God there are two kinds of truths. For there are some things true concerning God which exceed every faculty of human reason, as that God is Three in One. But there are some things which natural reason can attain, as, for example, that God exists, there is only one God, and other things of this kind. Those things even the philosophers have proved demonstratively, led by the light of natural reason". (*Contra Gentiles,* C. III.)

Having once established the existence of God, reason, then, of itself, can tell us that Revelation is possible. Granted the existence of God as the Creator, reason can easily conclude also that miracles are likewise possible. Even John Stuart Mill frankly asserted, "If I believed in God, I would have no difficulty in admitting miracles." Not only the possibility of miracles, but their happening as facts can be demonstrated by reason alone. Reason, now in possession of the following truths — (1) That God exists; (2) that Revelation is therefore possible; that miracles are likewise possible and have actually taken place can advance another step and show that God has actually spoken to man and revealed certain truths, some of which reason could discover of itself, as God's existence, many others which are altogether beyond the power of reason ever to attain or dream of, as most of the revealed truths contained in the *Apostles' Creed.*

Now that this body of revealed truth has been given by God to man, reason can prove from historical evidence independently of the authority of faith or the Church. This body of truth has been placed under the guardianship of an *infallible authority* in the Catholic Church, whose divinely appointed prerogative is to keep intact, interpret and teach to the world this body of revealed doctrine. That revealed body of doctrine is, therefore, hedged in, and absolutely secure from error, and no cloud of doubt can ever dim its truth and certainty.

Now, grant that there is a divine revelation and an infallible Church, whose mission is to guard, preserve, and teach that revelation, then no man, no scientific research, no exercise of reason can claim the right to contradict this revelation and this Church. Human reason and scientific research are not the activities of a God-like intelligence. No, they are the activities of a human intellect, and the human intellect, because a *created* intellect, as well as all its activities, are *subject* to God and truth everywhere. *There can be no freedom to oppose the truth.* No one has a privilege to free himself from the bonds of truth, or claim a right to become an independent creator of truth, any more than he has the right of freedom to change the multiplication table.

But the champions of independent reason as against revelation and an infallible church may assert that such a revelation and such a church is impossible — well, then, let them prove it. On this the issue rests. If they succeed in proving it, then, at that moment, we shall cease to be Catholics, and Christianity will have been the most stupendous lie in history. The burden of proof clearly *rests upon the independent Rationalists. We* are in possession. If they cannot

prove it, then let them give up their vociferous declamations of *absolute freedom of thought.*

This, briefly, is how the case stands between recalcitrant reason and the authority of the Catholic Church. The question is a large one. The intellectual world cannot ignore it. It is ever living. We have only offered a few suggestions to stimulate your own reflections and further study. The reason why the question has been introduced in the "History of Modern Thought" is because the *independence of individual reason in philosophical speculations* forms a leading, and, it may be said, the fundamental tenet of *Descartes' system.* Throughout the "Ages of Faith" all Catholics held, as they hold to-day with St. Augustine, "that philosophy, that is the study of wisdom and religion are not things apart". The Catholic is convinced that no *certain result or conclusion* of human research will ever come in conflict with his faith, just as the mathematician is never afraid that his certain conclusions will ever be contradicted by the biologist or chemist. Truth can never contradict truth. An infallible Church *in matters wherein it is infallible* cannot contradict any certainly demonstrated truth of natural reason, nor can any certainly demonstrated truth of natural reason contradict an infallibly established dogma of the Catholic Church.

It is this conviction that enables the Catholic philosopher or scientist to devote himself with great freedom and impartiality to research in every field. It is upon this conviction rests the peace between faith and philosophy or science. Faith and science are not torn apart, are not divorced, but join hands peacefully, like truth with truth, though derived from different sources.

It was Descartes' philosophy that first in its spirit tended towards, and ultimately consummated *the com-*

plete divorce between philosophy and science on the one hand and faith and authority on the other. And by this *divorce* we mean that individual reason looks upon itself, not only as fully competent to discover all truth, so that which it cannot of itself know, it flatters itself is not truth, but also that individual reason confidently enters into the investigation of the great vital truths — God, His attributes, morality, religion, man's origin, and last end, without the slightest regard for what revelation teaches on those awful subjects. Should reason arrive at results, in its speculations, that contradict openly the settled and irreversible dogmas of revelation it cares not. Reason throws ruthlessly aside authority and revelation as even a *negative guide* or standard, whereby it may judge of the truth or falsehood of its independent results. (*Introd.*) Reason, in accord with the spirit of modern thought, goes its own sweet way, just as if revelation was never given to man. The obvious consequences of this attitude is, of course, the frank denial that revelation has been given, and that the whole supernatural order, original sin, grace, miracles, sacraments, the supernatural origin and final destiny of man are myths, just because they are above and beyond the reach of reason.

No doubt Descartes personally professed to look trustfully to the authority of the Church, as a child to its mother, and again proclaimed his readiness to submit all his conclusions to her decisions. "I affirm nothing", he says, "but I submit all my principles to the authority of the Catholic Church". (*Prin.* IV., 252.) But the tendency of his speculations were widely different. So that if many to-day venture, as they do, to set forth theories about God, revelation and morality, that ignore revelation and the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, the divinely

appointed custodian of that revelation, they allege that it was Descartes who taught them. *The captains of reason* no longer look to the beacon light of divine revelation and authority to protect, at least *negatively,* fallible reason from the rocks and shallows, when it embarks upon the sea of thought to pursue its investigations of the most ϕbstruse, yet vital, questions for humanity. They rave about "theological fetters", "ecclesiastical manacles upon freedom of thought" and extol Descartes as "the emancipator who established modern freedom of thought", "the leader who guided Europe out of the house of bondage". . . . But the bondage of truth *is* freedom. "The truth shall make you free". Even Pascal bears witness to the reasonableness of the submission of what professes to be the results of reason to the established truths of Revelation. We say "professes to be the result of reason", because no really valid conclusion of reason ever contradicts an article of faith. Pascal says:

> "If we submit everything to reason our religion will have nothing in it mysterious or supernatural. If we violate the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous. There is nothing so in conformity with reason as the disavowal of the supremacy of reason".

John Locke bears similar testimony. (*Introd. Lect. end.*)

It is *fundamental* to Catholics that there resides in the Catholic Church an infallible authority to preserve and teach to all nations the objective truths of Revelation, because the Holy Spirit is Her guide, guaranteed by the promise of Christ. "And I will be with you all days even to the consummation of the

world" (*Math.* 28-20). Protestants deny this infallible authority and substitute for it the *fundamental principle* that each person may construct his own religion from the Bible by his own *private judgment,* and this private judgment is inspired by the Holy Spirit granted personally to each individual. The tendency of Cartesian philosophy favored this latter view, a tendency that gradually developed into full maturity in the system of Kant who gave it, as we shall see, a philosophical basis.

Reason, of course, is entirely free in its own sphere of scientific investigation. Even if philosophers and scientists fall into errors, the Church will look upon their errors with indifference, *provided those errors, masquerading in the garb of truth, do not contradict its settled dogmas.* Otherwise the Church will leave philosophers and scientists to fight out their own battles, and correct their own errors. It is not the direct mission of the Church to teach a philosophy or science. In a word, divinely revealed truths are (1) a negative and (2) hypothetical guide to natural reason in its speculations, and all reasonable men acknowledge it as such.

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